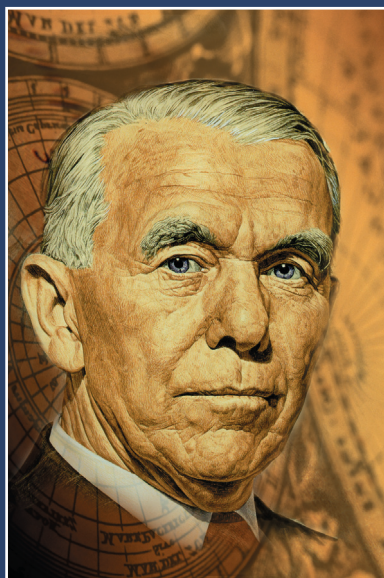


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# Rethinking the National Interest: Putin's Turn in Russian Foreign Policy

By Sergei Medvedev



The Marshall Center Papers, No. 6

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***By Sergei Medvedev***

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## Foreword

September 11, 2001 dramatically transformed the international landscape and highlighted the interdependence that binds us together by a common threat. The terrorist attacks make us reappraise global challenges, security doctrines and strategic partnerships.

In this new strategic environment, Russia's singular global role has once again come to the fore and the state aligned itself closer to the Western security community. Russian President Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to express his condolences to President George W. Bush. This symbolic act forged a new strategic partnership that has endured over the past two years. Despite disagreements over the Iraqi war, the value of strategic partnership was reconfirmed at the Putin-Bush summit in May 2003.

In a wider sense, President Putin has used the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) as an opportunity to realign Russia with the West, pursuing the policy of Westernization both at home and abroad. This appears to be a deliberate, long-term policy—but what stands behind this transformation? What are the roots, philosophy and the practical reasoning behind Russia's new course? Marshall Center Paper No. 6, by Dr. Sergei Medvedev, seeks to answer these questions.

Medvedev posits that the realignment in Russian foreign and security policy is revolutionary and enduring. It is a profound reappraisal of Russia's national interests, reversing centuries-old imperial paradigms. In order to illustrate the

magnitude of this change, Medvedev looks at the historical roots of Russian statehood and foreign policy.

In a compressed historical review beginning with Ivan the Terrible, the author focuses on Russia's development into a "national-security state," a state that sacrificed individual and public life to all-encompassing goals of national security and territorial expansion.

However, by the 1980s this territorial imperative had proven unsustainable, and the USSR began a historical decline. Medvedev explores how Russia's leaders responded to the challenge of transforming an obsolescent system and adapting Russia to new global rules of engagement in a post-industrial world. According to Medvedev, Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* was essentially an evolutionary project that attempted to adapt the socialist organism to a changed environment but did not question the regime's fundamentals, while Boris Yeltsin attempted to transform Russia by means of an anti-communist revolution and "shock therapy." Although both reform plans ran into problems, their impact has been quite dramatic. Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's projects initiated a critical reassessment of Russia's role in world affairs and set the stage for Putin.

Medvedev examines Putin's foreign policy and the "silent revolution" in Russian security thinking. Despite crises in relations with the West, Russia remained in a framework of cooperation with the West. Medvedev argues that Putin's bid to anchor Russia in the West after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 concludes and consolidates Russia's foreign policy transformation of the past fifteen years and reverses the traditional, imperial paradigm.

In a wider sense, Medvedev suggests that a larger, systemic change concerning the relation between domestic and foreign policy has occurred in Russia. For the past several hundred years, geopolitical reasoning dominated domestic politics and dictated the mobilization of internal resources. Today, it is precisely the opposite: foreign policy caters to domestic reform.

Concealed behind routine politics and diplomatic gambits, many policy-makers have not yet grasped this fundamental change. Medvedev's paper makes sense of this transformation and illuminates the nature and the sheer magnitude of Putin's foreign policy revolution—undertaken as his personal crusade, against the background of a skeptical foreign and security policy elite and reform-fatigue among the electorate.

The paper helps put Russia in perspective. Too often, interpretations of Russian foreign policy are driven by short-term thinking, and Moscow's occasional disagreements with the West are magnified into strategic ruptures. Medvedev reminds us that Russia is departing from a centuries-old imperial tradition deeply embedded in the national psyche—and post-imperial departures have never been easy. In fact, one has to look back five hundred years to fully appreciate the scope of the political, psychological and conceptual transformation that has occurred in Russian foreign policy over the past fifteen years and was consolidated in Putin's strategic post-9/11 choice.

John P. Rose, Ph.D.  
Director,  
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## Executive Summary

The paper examines the historical and political roots behind a transformation in Russian foreign policy undertaken by President Vladimir Putin in the wake of the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001. Putin, the first foreign leader to voice support for the United States, proceeded to forge a new strategic relationship with the US and embarked on a wider policy of rapprochement with the West.

Since then, Russia's initial, unequivocal support for the US has been compromised by disagreements over the war in Iraq. Yet, current Russian foreign policy is vastly different from the previous decade's in that, using the opportunity and the rhetoric of the war on terrorism, it has made a normative choice in favor of Westernization and in favor of a strategic partnership with the United States and Europe.

The paper posits that the realignment in Russian foreign and security policy is revolutionary and has lasting value. This is neither an *ad hoc* marriage of convenience nor a policy of playing a weaker hand, but a profound reappraisal of Russia's national interests and place in the world, defying centuries-old imperial paradigms. In order to appreciate the magnitude of this change, one has to look beyond the Putin presidency and transformations of the past decade into the historical roots of Russian statehood and foreign policy.

This is the focus of **Part One, "Modernity at Large."** Ever since the Moscow principality began to expand in the sixteenth century, the Russian state had to take on an increasingly

strategic role—it built roads and outposts, extended and defended borders, fought mounted horsemen of the Great Steppe in the East and opposed regular armies that invaded from the West. By virtue of geography and nature, the state played the central role in Russian history, suppressing political and civil society as well as the market economy, and stressing strategic, territorial and mobilization priorities. This phenomenon, called the “national-security state,” included the pursuit of total control, territorial expansion and messianic goals in different parts of the world, from the “Third Rome” to the Third International.

Built on foundations laid by the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the logic of the “national-security state” culminated in the Soviet Union, a quintessential product of the twentieth century. The USSR was the ultimate modern experiment in history: secular, urban, rationally planned, militarized, and industrial. The entire country catered to its imperial ambition—aiming for the world proletarian revolution in the 1920s and 1930s and for strategic parity with the West during the Cold War. However, by the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet state and its foreign policy had proven to be unsustainable. The economy was distorted in favor of heavy industry and military production, and growth stalled. The vast territory proved too costly to populate and maintain. The cumbersome bureaucracy could not cope with the challenge of the information revolution, relegating the USSR to the technological periphery.

Finally, dwindling domestic resources could no longer sustain Soviet global commitments, including competing in an arms race with the West, supporting Soviet satellites, and encouraging the world revolutionary movement. In the ideological arena, the Soviet model had lost its attractiveness

worldwide. The ailing Soviet Union, a textbook case of “imperial overstretch,” entered a phase of historical decline.

The paper goes on to explore the response of the country’s leaders to this secular decline in the past fifteen years. They faced the challenge of transforming an obsolescent modern system and adapting Russia to new global rules of engagement in a post-industrial, postmodern world. Mikhail Gorbachev’s *perestroika* was essentially a project of socialist evolution that did not question the regime’s fundamentals. With *perestroika*’s failure and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Boris Yeltsin attempted to change Russia by means of an anti-communist revolution and “shock therapy.” However, largely due to mismanagement of reform and the “stealing of the state” by powerful lobbies and oligarchs, his transformation project stalled as well. Still, both Gorbachev’s and Yeltsin’s policies questioned Russia’s self-perception as a superpower and initiated a critical reassessment of Russia’s role in world affairs: by the late 1990s, Russia had come to realize that she should turn from shaping the world to adapting to the external environment.

Confronted with this situation, President Putin embarked on a new reform effort. His agenda is to adapt Russia to globalization. For this task, one of his key tools is a new foreign policy. **Part Two, “The Changing Landmarks of Foreign Policy,”** examines the “silent revolution” in Russian foreign and security policy. It analyzes the policy setting by outlining four imperatives shaping Russian foreign policy. These are:

***The resource imperative.*** For the first time in her modern history, Russia lacks the resources to fulfill her traditional global role, while her residual global levers, such as nuclear

weapons and her seat on the UN Security Council, are becoming increasingly inadequate.

***The domestic imperative.*** The necessity of internal reform plays a major role in formulating foreign policy. Previously, geopolitical reasoning dominated domestic politics, and dictated the mobilization of internal resources; formerly Russia was a country that catered to her external mission. Today, it is the opposite: foreign policy is seen as catering to the domestic reform agenda.

***The economic imperative.*** Russia is gradually becoming integrated into global markets at the levels of the state, the economic elites, the middle class and the mass consumer.

***The institutional imperative.*** Russia is increasingly compelled to shape her foreign policy in terms of international institutions, such as NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe or the World Trade Organization.

Next, the paper analyzes policy outputs, observing the continuity of Russian foreign policy from Gorbachev to Yeltsin and Putin. Despite the many crises in relations with the West, such as the first wave of NATO expansion in 1997, the Russian financial crisis in 1998, and the wars in Kosovo in 1999 and in Iraq in 2003, Russia never turned to policies of isolationism and confrontation and remained in a framework of cooperation with the West. The paper argues that Putin's bid to anchor Russia in the West after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 concludes and consolidates Russia's foreign policy transformation of the past fifteen years and reverses the traditional (imperial) paradigm.

According to traditional thinking (which still characterizes most of the Russian foreign policy and security elite), territory was sacrosanct and therefore strategic, while alliances, treaties and norms were shifting and tactical. Putin seeks to reverse this paradigm, treating territory as a tactical resource and an alliance with the West as a strategic goal. What his critics at home bemoan as the “encirclement of Russia” and a geopolitical catastrophe—NATO expansion into the Baltic states, separation of Kaliningrad by a visa barrier, deployment of US troops in Afghanistan, US bases in Central Asia and special forces in Georgia, war in Iraq, and a possible wider, long-term US presence in the Persian Gulf—Putin regards as mere tactical concessions, pawns in a larger, strategic design.

In this sense, he reformulates national interest from a spatial to functional definition. For the first time in Russian history, national interest is not linked to sheer power and territorial control, but rather to domestic reform, prosperity and efficiency of governance. Putin still envisions Russia as a world power: his policy is not pro-Western, but pro-Russian, and of a pragmatic variety. His policy is driven by enlightened self-interest; he needs the West for Russia to succeed in a global world. A black belt in judo, he applies its philosophy: do not counter an overwhelming opponent, but use his force to your own advantage.

The pragmatic nature of Putin’s Westernization is underscored by the fact that he pursues different agendas with different parts of the West—Europe and the US—and tries to gain tactical advantages on both sides (as seen, for example, in Russian maneuvers before and during the Iraq war). In issues of terrorism and homeland security, Russian polity and society seem to be closer to the US than to Europe. One can see the emerging “arch of national interest” extending from the US to

Russia. Russia tries to emulate the global posture of the US on a smaller scale, at least in the eastern and southern areas of the former Soviet space, accepting a role as the junior partner of the US in the war on terrorism. Meanwhile, in Europe, Russia places her emphasis on trade, investment, institutional dialogue and cooperative regionalism (as illustrated by Kaliningrad).

“Hard-security” affinity and partnership with the US and “soft-security” dialogue and institution-building with Europe—such are the two faces of Putin’s Westernization.

## **Introduction**

### **Moscow, Red Square, 1555**

The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 have had an effect on the international system similar to the fall of the Berlin Wall. While the end of the Cold War had inaugurated the 1990s, a decade of transition and internationalism, 9/11 and the war on terrorism that followed have introduced a new condition of international relations characterized by emphasis on security and national interest.

The change of the strategic landscape has re-defined the roles not only of global players, the United States, Britain, Russia, France and Germany, but also those of key institutions such as the United Nations, European Union and NATO. One of the major changes in the post-9/11 world has been Russia's new role, with President Vladimir Putin voicing support for the United States in the immediate wake of the terrorist acts, forging a strategic relationship with the Bush administration, and embarking on a wider policy of rapprochement with the West.

Like Gorbachev's "New Thinking" 15 years ago, Putin's foreign policy turn came as a surprise for the world and lacked support from Russian foreign policy and security elites. In the two years since Putin's bold move, Russia's policy has become more diversified, and initial unequivocal support for the US has been compromised by disagreements over war in Iraq in March and April 2003.

What stands behind Putin's turn? A demand for Westernization among domestic elites? A scheme by anonymous planners from Putin's inner circle of security agencies, or Boris Yeltsin's powerful "family" clan? Was it a secret condition laid down by Yeltsin when he appointed Putin as his successor? Or maybe, according to one observer's facetious remark, "Putin has been secretly reading the *Economist* all these years?"

The following essay seeks to answer these questions by looking not so much at personalities, but rather at systemic forces at play. The hypothesis is that Putin's foreign policy turn—like Gorbachev's before him—was not simply a bold design by one man, or by certain lobbies, but a representation of a wider systemic change that had taken place in Russia in the last decades. Flawed as it may appear, Putin's Westernization is a project aimed at adapting Russia to globalization, matching national ambitions with national resources, and finding Russia's place in the emerging new world order.

In a search for the roots of Putin's strategic realignment, this essay turns to history. To gain a better understanding of the sources and logic of Russian foreign policy, one has to examine the traditional models of Russian statehood and the ways in which Russians viewed and sought to change the world. Russia today, Russia exposed to globalization, has to be measured against traditional Russia, Russia as it became known to the world in the past 500 years. In short, this is an essay about foreign policy as explained by history, culture and geography, and as manifested in Putin's Westernization and a strategic alliance with the West in the wake of 9/11.

One can hardly think of a better representation of Russian history than St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow's Red Square. Its dominating appearance embodies Russia's "otherness" for the Western eye. Generations of bemused foreigners likened it to a



mosque (Napoleon in 1812), a giant plant, a cake, or a cloud bank. Gracing the covers of tourist guides and textbooks of Russian, St. Basil's testifies not only to Russia's acclaimed spirituality (*dukhovnost'*), but also to the peculiar taste and iron fist of the Tsars.<sup>1</sup>

Architecture, like geopolitics, is spatial art, shaped by the intentions of the ruler. Buildings often convey political meanings far beyond their original purpose. The architectural extravaganza of St. Basil's carries a geopolitical message. The Cathedral, built between 1555-1561, commemorated a key event in Russian history, the capture of Kazan, the capital of Tatar Khanate on the Volga, by Ivan the Terrible in 1552. The nine chapels of St. Basil's were consecrated to the nine stages of the siege of Kazan, turning the whole edifice into a symbolic map of action.<sup>2</sup>

The capture of Kazan was a key event in the rise of the Russian state. Two hundred and fifty years of the Tatar yoke (from the mid-thirteenth to the late fifteenth centuries) had effectively excluded Russia from the mainstream of European history and culture. She had been relegated to the continental periphery, squeezed between Lithuania and the Horde. A religious and national revival started in the fifteenth century, followed by the assembly of the Russian lands during the reigns of the Moscow Princes Ivan III (1462-1505), his son Vassily III (1505-1533), and grandson Ivan IV, "the Terrible" (1533-1584). It was during this period that the messianic, geopolitical idea of "Moscow, the Third Rome" took shape, that the Metropolitan of Moscow became the Patriarch of Moscow, thus rising from a local to an ecumenical rank, and that the Moscow Princes conferred upon themselves the title of Tsar. In doing so, they borrowed symbols of the heavenly authority from the Byzantine Empire, including the ultimate geopolitical icon, the double-headed eagle, with one head looking west and the other, east, which still remains Russia's coat of arms.

In Russia's eastward movement, crossing the Volga in Kazan was a symbolic act, certainly an emancipation from the past, but also an outline of the future territorial spread. Even today, the Volga remains a Russian frontier. Crossing the river, one moves from a developed west bank, home to old merchant towns like Samara and Syzran', to the sparsely populated Transvolga steppe on the east bank, part of the Great Eurasian Steppe. Indeed, the psychological border between Europe and Asia is not the Urals, but rather the Volga. Crossing that border in the sixteenth century, Russia embarked upon a 450-year cycle of spatial and statal expansion. In this sense, St. Basil's Cathedral opens up the entire Russian space and Russian history, standing as a geopolitical landmark and a monument to Russian modernity.

Modernity is a key concept of this essay, which examines the evolution of Russia's security thinking, and specifically, the foreign policy of President Vladimir Putin. The essay identifies the modern origins and features of the Russian state and explores the crisis of modernity in Russian domestic and foreign policy. In brief, the essay argues that Russia, especially in her Soviet incarnation, was a product of European modernity and the Enlightenment. The crisis that befell her in the last decades of the twentieth century was not an isolated national misfortune, but a manifestation of a major historical force, the global crisis of modernity. Against that background, Putin's foreign policy constitutes a major departure from modern discourses of territoriality and security, and amounts to no less than a revolution in the formulation of Russia's national interest.

Modernity is an ambiguous concept, underscored by the fact that it does not have an exact Russian equivalent. The closest translation is *novoye vremya*, "the new time." "Modernity" becomes even vaguer on the treacherous ground of Russian history. Compared to Western nations, Russia has the least established and most interpretative history, especially for pre-

Petrine times. Before the 1700s, Russian history had been narrated by foreign travelers, like the Scot, Patrick Gordon, usually from the words of the courtiers and often re-written according to the tastes of the ruler of the day. As they say, Russia is a country with an unpredictable past. This raises the questions: what is modernity and how does it apply to Russia?

The label “modern,” first articulated in nineteenth century sociology, was meant to distinguish the “present” era from the previous one, which was labeled “antiquity” or “tradition.” The beginning of modernity is a contested issue among pundits: it seems as if the modern period starts earlier and earlier every time historians look at it. Some trace it to the Industrial Revolution in England and the Enlightenment, and that means eighteenth century; some go back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and some to the Reformation and Renaissance, the fifteenth or sixteenth century, or even earlier.

It is generally agreed that in a philosophical sense, modernity includes the ideas of the Enlightenment and Renaissance, stressing the individual self (which is able to position itself in history, thus distinguishing “modern” from “old”), humanism, rationality (Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*) and secularism. In practical terms, modernity included the great geographic discoveries, the Copernican revolution, the emergence of science (especially Newton’s physics) and early industrialization. Finally, in political terms, modernity stands for the centralization of governance and the monopolization of violence by rulers that led to the emergence of the classical Westphalian nation-state. What distinguishes a modern state from its earlier version is the idea of domestic sovereignty (as described by Thomas Hobbes and Jean Bodin): the legitimate monopoly of violence enjoyed by the state and confined by state borders. In this sense, the modern nation-state is reified as a geographical, indeed, geometrical unit, and modernity is about the territorial dimension of power, as it developed in the West from

the Italian city-states of the Renaissance through the Westphalian nation-state to the European empires of the past three centuries.<sup>3</sup>

It is especially the latter aspect of modernity—centralization of political power, the ascendance of the state that instrumentalized violence, and the idea of territorial control—that allows us to trace the origins of Russian modernity to five hundred years ago, to Ivan the Terrible. Although Russia lacked modern philosophical foundation (indeed, there has been no tradition of rational, non-religious philosophy in Russia), and was introduced to science and industrialization later than most European nations, as far as political modernity is concerned, Russia has experienced it in full.

In particular, the idea of modernity is crucial to understand Russian statehood, imperial format, security thinking, and foreign policy. In **Part One, “Modernity at Large,”** the argument is presented chronologically, examining major features of Russian modernity as they emerged in history, from the early territorial spread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through the Petrine modernization and industrialization and emergence of the Russian Empire, to the culmination of modernity and the Enlightenment in the grandiose Soviet experiment. The essay explores the essential features of Russian modernity—statism (the idea and political practice of state dominance), industrialization, militarization and imperialism—that in the Soviet Union were magnified to the extent of becoming unsustainable. The essay also explains the systemic reasons behind the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union.

This historical exposé is necessary to understand the challenges faced by the Soviet/Russian leaders of the past fifteen years: transformation of the obsolescent modern system and adaptation of Russia to the new global rules of engagement in the post-industrial, postmodern world. Where Gorbachev’s project of socialist evolution and Yeltsin’s project of anti-communist

revolution failed, President Putin has undertaken a new attempt at reform. In his agenda, foreign policy is a key area of transformation and the instrument of adapting Russia to globalization.

**Part Two, “The Changing Landmarks of Foreign Policy,”** examines the ongoing “silent revolution” in Russian foreign policy, as it departs from the key principles of Russian modernity. Firstly, it analyzes the policy setting by outlining four imperatives shaping Russian foreign policy: availability of resources; domestic imperatives; economic imperatives; and the institutional imperative compelling Russia to shape her foreign policy in terms of international institutions. Secondly, it analyzes the policy outputs, observing the continuity of Russian foreign policy from Gorbachev to Yeltsin and Putin. Despite the many crises in relations with the West, *e.g.* NATO enlargement in 1997, Russian financial crisis in 1998, or war in Kosovo in 1999, Russia never turned to isolationism and confrontation and stayed in the framework of cooperation with the West. The essay argues that Putin’s bid to anchor Russia in the West after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 concludes and consolidates Russia’s foreign policy revolution of the past fifteen years, signifies the end of Russia’s post-Communist transition, and represents a break with the modern paradigm.

Finally, the essay attempts a policy forecast, suggesting that the future of Russian foreign policy is now largely contingent on developments in the West. After 9/11, two distinct polities took shape in the West: the world of hard security, military force and pursuit of national interest represented by the United States, and the world of norms, multilateralism and “soft security” represented by the European Union. The perennial dilemma of Russia and the West has been reformulated: in order to answer the traditional “whither Russia,” one has first to decide “whither the West”—or rather, *which* West is Russia going to join. As Russia exits the

protracted period of modernity, she carries into the new millennium the same old ambiguity of identity characteristic of the past centuries, and her relations with the West remain an open-ended story.

## **PART I. Modernity at Large**

### **The national-security state**

Russia is a belated European: she missed out on the major projects of modern European history, including the Renaissance and the Reformation, or joined them belatedly and incompletely, as was the case with the Enlightenment, atheism, liberalism and democracy. In spite of this historical asynchronicity, Russia still enjoyed political modernity in roughly the same period as Europe, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The view held by a majority of historians maintains that the father of modern, “European” Russia was Peter the Great (1672-1725). However, more researchers are tracing the roots of modernization in Russia to pre-Petrine times, interpreting the rise of the Muscovite state as an essentially modern phenomenon, the “well-ordered police state” in the words of Marc Raeff (“police” meaning administration in the broadest sense).<sup>4</sup> Jarmo Kotilaine and Marshall Poe have pointed out that starting in the sixteenth century, Russia was increasingly drawn into international conflicts where she was forced to fight “modern” wars with a new kind of adversary that was fundamentally different from the mounted horsemen of the Eurasian steppe. Russia faced the challenge of standing armies and the latest arms that the gunpowder revolution had to offer.<sup>5</sup>

The need to look back into the early period of the history was reflected in a request from the US Department of State in the mid-1980s to a specialist at Harvard University, aiming to trace the mainsprings of Soviet security thinking to the Muscovite period. In his “Muscovite Political Folkways,” Edward Keenan argues that

Soviet political culture was an update of what had developed in medieval Russia and was shaped by the natural conditions of life in the Eastern European forest:

The most significant autonomous actor in peasant life was not the individual (who could not survive alone in this environment), and not even the nuclear family (which, in its extended form, was marginally viable, but still too vulnerable in disease and sudden calamity), but the village, to whose interests all others were in the end subordinated.<sup>6</sup>

These features were to be found not only in the village but also, writ large, in the emergent Muscovite state. And since for it, too,

***The main modernizer in Russia had always been the state, embarked upon territorial expansion, spatial control and social order.***

the major aim was survival, the state gave its prime attention to policies directed at avoiding chaos, to safety first, while the major guarantor of such policies was a strict principle of centralization.<sup>7</sup> The central authority, increasingly assembling around the “divinely anointed Grand Prince of

Moscow,” had therefore emerged as a key player in Russia’s transition from medieval to modern times.

The main modernizer in Russia had always been the state, embarked upon a developmental mission that entailed territorial expansion, spatial control and social order. Indeed, what started in Russia some 500 years ago was a great modern experiment in territoriality, the principle of territorial expansion taken *ad infinitum*. Russia as a phenomenon emerged in space, and was created by extensive means. Land had always been in abundance; in the east and south, borders were non-existent, and for the last five centuries, the state and its people had been expanding across the continent, largely uninhibited by adversaries or major natural obstacles. The speed of this expansion was spectacular: having captured Kazan in 1552, in 1598 Russia annexed the Siberian



khanate on the Irtysh, more than 1,000 miles to the east. As Richard Pipes has calculated, between the mid-sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries Russia had been expanding at a rate of 42,000 square kilometers per year.<sup>8</sup>

The Russian spread covered entire northern Eurasia, including Mongolia and Manchuria, and part of the northwestern American continent, including Alaska and going as far south as Fort Ross near San Francisco. In the twentieth century, it spilled into outer space, in yet another manifestation of Russia's territorial pursuit: there is a cultural determinism in the fact that the USSR was the first to launch Sputnik in 1957 and to put the first man, Yuri Gagarin, in orbit in 1961.

In the phenomenon of Russian modernity, statehood came to be manifested first and foremost in spatial format, the state's primary functions being the expansion, control, development and defense of territory. Over the centuries, the territorial imperative had become *the* foreign policy of Russian, and later Soviet, leaders; as Vyacheslav Molotov has reportedly conceded, "I saw my task as a foreign minister in expanding the borders of my fatherland as far as possible."<sup>9</sup> In Soviet urban folklore, the territorial imperative was typified by a joke in which a schoolboy coming into a school supply shop asked for a globe of the Soviet Union.

The territorial imperative gave birth to a specific type of governance, defined by strategic, territorial and mobilization priorities. A Russian historian, Vassily Klyuchevsky, called this a "combatant order of the state" (*boyevoi stroi gosudarstva*).<sup>10</sup> Richard Hellie has labeled this a "garrison state,"<sup>11</sup> while Laurent Murawiec spoke of a "national-security state" driven by two imperatives:

The pursuit at all and any cost of “national greatness” defined as a messianic, religious mission (the Third Rome, the Third International) and a territorial imperative (Siberia, the South towards Constantinople and the Mediterranean, Central Europe, and, why not? Western Europe, the Warm Seas, and twentieth century “Great Game” geopolitics), the two merging in the form of Empire.<sup>12</sup>

Russia had been an empire *par excellence*, a space in which national statehood had been subordinated to imperial expansion and nationalism to imperialism. “I do not know Russia; I know only Russian Empire,” a maxim attributed to Count Witte, a prominent Russian statesman at the turn of the twentieth century, was meant to be the epitome of national pride. It can also be interpreted as a script of national tragedy. Indeed, Russia proper, Russia as a nation, had never really existed outside an imperial format. As succinctly formulated by Geoffrey Hosking: “Britain *had* an empire, but Russia *was* an empire—and perhaps still is.”<sup>13</sup>

The state with its imperial drive, permanently expanding, assimilating new lands, peoples and religions, had precluded the emergence of stable patterns of settlement and of societal spaces where ethnicity could develop into nationality; in the end, the Russian Empire had prevented the formation of the Russian nation. A nation is local and exclusive, based on mythologies and rituals of collectivity, whereas the Russian state, embarked upon a strategic, developmental and civilizing mission, was expanding and inclusive, failing to provide anchors of national identity.

Russia had always been a state without a nation, and rather than nationalism, its modernizing forces were statism and imperialism. The modernizing power of nationalism, as it had occurred in Western Europe, turning “peasants into Frenchmen,”<sup>14</sup> had never taken place in Russia. The construction of Russian national self-consciousness, to the extent that it had happened in the nineteenth century, was a project of the educated class, and an “imagined

community” of the nation had never been broadcast into the wider population in a way comparable with nation-states of the West. The construction of the new, non-ethnic identities in the twentieth century—the “proletarian internationalism” and the “Soviet people”—had suppressed Russianness for yet another several decades. Observing the phenomenon of Russia’s “inarticulate nationhood,” Igor Zevelev has concluded that “Russians emerged from the USSR as an incomplete nation with a surprisingly low level of national consciousness and lack of a mass-based national movement.”<sup>15</sup>

Much as it had prevented the development of the Russian nation, the state had prevented the emergence of a proper economy in Russia. Obligated to defend its long borders, to combat numerous neighbors, and to develop and sustain a vast territory, the Russian state had to withdraw a large portion of the national product from the turnover for the purpose of controlling the space. Driven by the Empire’s increasing military appetite, the state acted as a main customer of agricultural and industrial output.<sup>16</sup> It was through the Treasury (*kazna*) acting as the main buyer that the state, in fact, directly controlled production without any necessity whatsoever of worrying about the circulation sphere. For example, in 1913, the peak year of Russia’s pre-revolutionary capitalism, the Treasury functioned as a customer, financier and purchaser of nearly 60% of total industrial output.<sup>17</sup>

The national economic model had favored the figure of the producer to the detriment of the merchant, and relations of distribution to the detriment of exchange. The overwhelming role of the Russian state had thus impeded the emergence of a proper economy as the mechanism of exchange. Rather, the national economic model had been something called *narodnoe khozyaistvo*, which has no English equivalent, but is roughly translated into German as *Volkswirtschaft*. The difference between *economy* and *khosyaistvo* is that the latter is built like a household. Members of

the household do not engage in relations of exchange; the goods are distributed by a master—a German *Wirt* or the Russian state.

Another corollary had been the weakness of an independent merchant, an urban economic agent that, in Western history, formed the *tiers état* (the Third Estate), demanded civil rights and a parliament, and eventually became the driving force of the bourgeois revolutions. *Stadtluft macht frei* (“City air makes you free”), as the Germans say; “no bourgeoisie, no democracy,” as put by Barrington Moore. The overwhelming role of the state in Russian history had effectively impeded the formation of a *Bürgergesellschaft*, a civil society, and of an independent public and political sphere.

In this peculiar pattern of governance, the Russian state had almost completely sacrificed societal security for the needs of state security. This model, too, was set forth by Ivan the Terrible. Ivan inaugurated a paradoxical type of state: weak in rendering services to society, and strong in controlling and terrorizing society—“predator-state and prey-nation,” as put by Murawiec.<sup>18</sup> Later modernizations in Russia, like the Petrine one, provide further examples of enhancing state security by destroying societal security, indeed the entire

***The Russian “national-security state” supplanted nationality, identity, civility, economy, and individual and societal security.***

social fabric. In Stalin’s period, when no segment of the population, including the state apparatus, was immune from repression, the gap between state and societal security had reached grotesque proportions. (Ironically, the repressive bodies themselves were the primary target of purges). The Great Terror of the late 1930s was the epitome of absolute security for the sovereign and absolute insecurity for the country; in fact the total purges of the higher echelons of the Red Army on the eve of World

War II had resulted in a deficit of mid-rank and flag officers, and in devastating Soviet losses in the first year of the War.

The most expansive territory of modern history had therefore produced the most centralized state, along with its insurmountable strategic commitments, its army, its rigid bureaucracy, and the subservient Orthodox Church. The entire Russian modernity had been about the phenomenon of the “national-security state,” which driven by the territorial and strategic imperatives, had supplanted nationality, identity, civility, economy, and individual and societal security. The genes of Russian statehood are modern and European. The model of a “well-ordered police state” was borrowed from the West, but operating in the wider Eurasian expanse, the Russian state had carried European ideas of territoriality, sovereignty and total administration to an extent incomprehensible in Europe proper.

## **The fruits of Enlightenment**

Russian modernity had culminated in Bolshevism and in Soviet Communism. The Soviet Union was not exactly a deviation from the mainstream of European history, nor was it an isolated, indigenous development. As Igor Shafarevich has argued, western liberalism and Soviet Communism were two guises of the same “inorganic civilization,” originating in the ideology of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, that emphasized progress, technology, the Weberian “disenchantment of nature,” and improvement of the human race. These were two versions of the same modernity, “two roads to one precipice,” *i.e.*, to the crisis of modern civilization that had become evident by the late twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

This goes some way in explaining a well-known sympathy of leading Western intellectuals, not only of the left persuasion, to the

Soviet regime in the 1920s and even at the peak of Stalinism. H.G. Wells and Albert Einstein, Romain Rolland and Bernard Shaw acclaimed the Soviet experiment, and like Voltaire before them, imagined Russia as a promised land of modernization. The aura of bold modernizers attributed to many Russian leaders, from Peter the Great and Catherine the Great to Lenin and Stalin, had helped the West to put up with the human cost of their policies.

Another interesting fact was the wide-spread popularity of the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s with Western artists and architects of modernism. Among those submitting plans for Stalin's grandiose construction of the Palace of the Soviets in the early 1930s were two of the most prominent architects of the past century: the Swiss Le Corbusier and the German Walter Gropius, leader of the Bauhaus. The modernists saw a natural affinity between their constructivist designs for society and the urban environment, and the political modernity of Bolshevism.<sup>20</sup> Lenin's famous formula that "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country" was an essentially modernist plan, combining unlimited political power with the promise of technology.

The Soviet Union was, in the words of Ted Hopf, "the ultimate modern experiment: secular, urban, rational, supra-national and industrial,"<sup>21</sup> all the elements that Horkheimer and Adorno identified as the modern Enlightenment.<sup>22</sup> The unique Soviet civilization, with its unrivalled mobilization capacity, social experimentation and industrial abandon, stood as an ultimate achievement of, and an awkward monument to, the Enlightenment. Simon Kordonsky has compared the Soviet Union with technically advanced civilizations of the mythological past which left behind perplexing artifacts like the Egyptian pyramids, columns made of chemically pure iron, and incomprehensible mural images:

Our far distant archaeologist-descendants are likely to be amazed as they explore the ruined launch silos for Soviet strategic missiles, huge radiation and chemical dumps and the remains of other great five-year-plan projects. They will be guessing as to which unknown civilization created them and why. We know only too well (although we try to forget) that these were made by convicts and army construction units equipped with spades, pickaxes and wheelbarrows for the majestic and senseless purpose of equitable distribution.<sup>23</sup>

In his trilogy *The Information Age*, Manuel Castells starts the analysis of the crisis of industrial statism and collapse of the Soviet Union with a question: Why, in the 1980s, did Soviet leaders feel the urgency to engage in a process of restructuring so radical that it ultimately led to the disintegration of the Soviet state? After all, the USSR was not only a military superpower, but the third largest industrial economy in the world, and the only state that was self-reliant in energy resources and raw materials. Soviet power was not seriously challenged either internationally or domestically: The world had entered an era of relative stability in the acknowledged spheres of influence between the superpowers. The war in Afghanistan was taking its toll in human suffering, in political image, and in military pride, but not to a greater extent than that of the damage inflicted on France by the Algerian War or on the United States by the Vietnam War. Political dissidence was limited to small intellectual circles, as respected as isolated; to Jewish people wanting to emigrate; and to kitchen gossip, a deeply rooted Russian tradition. “The second Russian revolution, which dismantled the Soviet empire, so ending one of the most daring and costly human experiments, may be the only historical change brought about without the intervention of social movements and/or without a major war.”<sup>24</sup> Why, then, such a sudden, precipitous breakup?

The answer to this question lies beyond the confines of the Soviet empire; it was the end of the entire paradigm of modernity, of which the USSR had been the staunchest follower, that spelled

the collapse of the Soviet state. Gorbachev's risky, and eventually uncontrollable, reforms were a manifestation of a historical force, the structural inability of statism and of the Soviet variant of industrialism to ensure the transition to postmodern, post-industrial, information society.<sup>25</sup>

The failure of the last great empire of modernity had been predetermined by its very successes, a permanent quest for industrialization, linear growth, territorial expansion, and quantitative achievement. For most of the existence of the Soviet Union, its economic growth was faster than that of the West, and its pace of industrialization one of the fastest in world history. The price of such growth had been considerable. Apart from the immense human and environmental costs, forced labor, and the creation of a distorted, uprooted society, the hyperindustrialized economy had resulted in incurable structural imbalances. Agriculture was squeezed of its products to subsidize industry and feed cities and emptied of its labor to provide industrial workers. Consumer goods, housing, and services gave priority to capital goods and to the extraction of raw materials, in order to make socialism self-sufficient in all key production lines. As in the age of Peter the Great, industry itself was put at the service of military-industrial production.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, in order to sustain the extensive model of growth and to fulfill the social obligations undertaken by the regime in the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet Union had to resort to ever increasing exports of oil, gas, materials and precious metals, which by the 1980s represented 90% of Soviet exports to the capitalist world. Apart from diverting energy and resources from investment in the national economy, this external trade structure, typical of underdeveloped economies, was susceptible to the secular deterioration of commodity prices *vis à vis* the prices of manufactured goods. The trade structure proved to be excessively vulnerable to fluctuations in the prices of oil on the world market.<sup>27</sup>



The oil crisis of the mid-1970s filled the coffers of the decaying Soviet regime, protracting its stagnation, *zastoi*, for yet another decade. The fall in oil prices in the mid-1980s exacerbated the imbalances of the Soviet economy and was partly responsible for Gorbachev's *perestroika*. High oil prices in the mid-1990s had inflated the bubble of Russia's speculative capitalism, which burst in August 1998, when oil prices fell to \$12 per barrel. Today, Putin's liberal economic reforms, along with the exhausting war in Chechnya, are again financed by high oil prices. Trying to enter the post-industrial economy, Russia is still suffering from a modern phenomenon, called the "Dutch disease"—an addiction to oil exports.

The greatest imbalance of Soviet industrial modernity was deeply rooted in the core of Soviet power, in a hypertrophied military-industrial complex (MIC) and an unsustainable defense budget. The Soviet Union was aiming for military and strategic parity with the United States at a time when the absolute size of the US economy was two to three times bigger. From the 1950s to the late 1980s, the Soviet Union had to stand up to three separate arms races: the strategic arms race with the West and China to sustain nuclear parity; the conventional arms race to sustain the Warsaw Pact-NATO standoff in Central Europe and to support the Communist movement in the Third World; and finally, the arms race in space opened by President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative.

These military requirements meant that in the 1980s, Soviet defense expenditures stood at 15% of its GNP, more than twice the equivalent proportion in the US at the peak of Reagan's defense buildup. The production of enterprises that were engaged in the MIC reached about 70% of all industrial production.<sup>29</sup> The MIC absorbed the best of Soviet industrial, human and technological resources, concentrating them in closed "numbered towns" (secret townships built around MIC facilities and designated by numbers

like Arzamas-16, Chelyabinsk-70, etc.) and *pochtovye yashiki*, “post-office boxes” (closed research facilities known only by their post office box number).

The military-industrial complex operated, in the words of Castells, as a “black hole in the Soviet economy.”<sup>30</sup> It was a virtual oligopoly of advanced know-how in the Soviet economy and society, and yet, due to its inherent conservatism and its uncompetitive nature, it stifled indigenous technological development in the USSR. Thus, once the Soviet programming and computer industry (still on the cutting edge in the 1940s and 1950s) was totally subordinated to the defense sector and exempted from the open economy, the military considered it strategically “safe” not to pursue indigenous computer development, but instead to copy Western platforms and programs. Rather than developing their own design and production lines, Soviet electronic R&D centers, all under the Ministry of Defense, engaged in smuggling computers from the West, proceeding to reverse engineering, and reproducing each model, adapting it to Soviet military specifications.<sup>31</sup> Thus the groundwork was laid for the Soviet technological retardation that became, in the 1990s, a 20-year difference in design and manufacturing capability, a “micro-chip deficiency disease,” as Thomas Friedman called it.<sup>32</sup>

***The Soviet Union of the 1980s could be compared to the Titanic: metallic, gigantic, smoking and navigated by self-confidence into a deadly field of ice.***

In other words, pursuing essentially modern goals (state power, territorial control, imperial ambition) by modern means (hierarchical organization, central planning), building a society and economy based on mobilization, industrialization and militarization, the Soviet Union had actually exempted itself from the key development of late modernity, the information revolution.

Soviet industrial statism was too heavy, burdened by an unsustainable territory and unrealistic global commitments, to survive in the post-industrial Information Age. The highly educated population of the USSR found itself trapped in an obsolete technological system. The Soviet Union of the 1980s could be compared to a metaphor of industrial civilization, the *Titanic*: metallic, gigantic, smoking and navigated by self-confidence into a deadly field of ice.

## Territorial overstretch

Apart from statism and industrialism, the third pillar of Russian and Soviet modernity was a specific territorial mentality resulting in internal colonization of the country by the state and in the external expansion of the state—the extrapolation of domestic practices and ideology into the world. Internally, the Russian Empire, as well as the Soviet state, sought to quell the natural diversity of its territory, with its ethnic, cultural and religious differences, in a rigid, institutional structure. Imperial Russia used a system of *gubernias*, administrative regions planned in such a way that a military garrison in the capital could reach any corner within the region in three days to quell a possible peasant uprising.

This principle was further institutionalized in the Soviet period within a unique Soviet system of “administrative-territorial division.”<sup>33</sup> This was a rigid hierarchical structure designed to control the Soviet space with all its “contents,” to organize the operation of state institutions as well as people’s everyday life. The whole spectrum of state activities (law enforcement, military draft, ideology, education, health care, housing, day-to-day management of local industry and agriculture, *etc.*) were carried out almost entirely on the regional level. All state functions were concentrated in the *oblasts*, which became focal points, vital centers, and *de facto* principal institutions of the state. Ethnicity, religion, and

group identity could only be sanctioned by the state within the system of administrative-territorial division. The rational logic of administrative subordination contradicted the natural logic of territorial relations. In this sense, the centralization imposed on Soviet territory contained seeds of disunity, and the precipitous regionalization of Russia in the 1990s was a “revenge of the territory.”<sup>34</sup>

By the same token, the very territorial format of modern Russia as “geopolitical heartland,” a “Eurasian bridge,” had become problematic. Its territorial stretch had a security logic but little economic rationale. Remote regions had an exclusively strategic value in the Soviet period. Planners moved tens of millions of people into Siberia and the Far East for reasons only partly related to the exploitation of strategic resources, such as oil, gas, gold, diamonds, and uranium. More important were considerations of state security—industrial and military facilities were placed as far away as possible from threats emanating from the West and China—and the idea that territory had to be populated to be controlled. In Siberia the Soviet Union built cities with populations over a million. In contrast, Canada, with its similar vast northern stretches, constructed only small outposts or temporary bases.

A recent Brookings Institution study using a “temperature per capita” (TPC) index (an economic rationality comparison of change in a country’s population-weighted average temperature as a result of economic location decisions) showed that Russia’s TPC declined dramatically between 1926 and 1990, while, for example, Canada’s rose over the same period. As a result, according to Clifford Gaddy and Fiona Hill, “Russia today is economically a colder and more remote country than it was a hundred years ago.”<sup>35</sup> Some 30% of Russia’s population lives east of the Urals in regions where average January temperatures range from -15 to -40 degrees centigrade.

Today, having largely lost their strategic significance, many of these regions have become unsustainable. A typical case is the Maritime Territory (*Primorsky krai*), that has been enduring a deep economic, social and energy crisis for the past decade. At some points, the city of Vladivostok had its electricity supplied from the engines of nuclear submarines at Pacific Fleet bases. According to Gaddy and Hill, if Russia is to be globally competitive, it will have to “come in from the cold” by divesting itself of “dinosaur” industries and downsizing its large cities in regions east of the Urals.<sup>36</sup>

A similar crisis of territoriality struck the Soviet Union on the international scene. The Soviet empire was organized along strict hierarchical lines. Starting with the rise of Moscow as the nucleus of a modern state, Russia has been expanding in concentric circles. This can be clearly seen in the spatial structure of Moscow: the Kremlin, as the citadel, is surrounded by concentric defensive rings: *Kitai-Gorod*; *Bely Gorod* (now the Boulevard Ring); *Zemlyanoy Gorod* (now the Garden Ring); the Moscow beltway confining the present-day city limits; and finally, the ring of missile defenses built 50-70 kilometers around Moscow, linked by a concrete beltway, *betonka*, now mostly used by the ubiquitous suburbanites, the *dachniki*.

Like Moscow, the Soviet Union had several defensive rings. In the geopolitical model proposed by Alexei Salmin, five concentric circles were designed as the security perimeters of the Soviet state. The first circle was Russia proper and its autonomous republics organized in the RSFSR, not contiguous with the capitalist world, save a small stretch of the boundary with Norway in the High North. The second circle was formed by the Union Republics, having boundaries in direct contact with the outside world. The third circle was formed by the “people’s democracies” outside the USSR but under direct Soviet control (essentially Eastern Europe, where the Brezhnev Doctrine had ruled supreme since the Soviet

invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968). The fourth circle was constituted by vassal states of pro-Soviet orientation (*e.g.*, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, Nicaragua, Angola, South Yemen) and Soviet geopolitical allies (*e.g.* Libya and Iraq); and the fifth circle was formed by the international Communist movement and its allies around the world.<sup>37</sup>

Running this enormous empire “over which the sun never set” required both power and ideology. On the one hand, the Marxist-Leninist ideology had mobilizing and legitimizing functions in Soviet foreign policy and the construction of empire. On the other hand, the Soviet Union relied on sheer display of power, as the modern rituals of Realism became the core of Soviet foreign policy, as illustrated by Stalin’s famous quip about the Pope: “How many divisions does he have?”

The two pillars, power and ideology, started to crumble in the late 1970s. On the ideological front, the failed promise of Marxism-Leninism and the decline in the effectiveness of the Soviet system led to a diminution of the attractiveness of the Soviet model worldwide. “Eurocommunism” in Western Europe, “goulash socialism” in Eastern Europe, and the stagnation of Soviet allies in the Third World all undermined this model.<sup>38</sup> On the military front, Soviet failures in Afghanistan and in Poland (the imposition of martial law by General Jaruzelski in 1980, a proxy of Soviet military intervention, did not end the internal ferment there), Ronald Reagan’s defense buildup, and, once again, the Strategic Defense Initiative, made Soviet military power look increasingly inadequate and insecure. As Hannes Adomeit has observed,

Incapable of or unwilling to embark on fundamental change, the leaders in Moscow adopted the attitude of ‘insulted giant’. They broke off arms control negotiations on strategic and medium-range nuclear weapons and conventional arms. They removed the last vestiges of selective détente from the West

European diplomatic agenda. . . . The Imperial and Ideological paradigm, in short, had finally relegated the Soviet Union to the role of mere irritant in international politics. Moscow still had sufficient power to obstruct and threaten, but no longer actively and constructively to shape world affairs.<sup>39</sup>

The imperial overstretch—a malaise diagnosed by Paul Kennedy<sup>40</sup>—together with the crisis of ideology and leadership, had made the USSR hostage to its own territorial format and ambition. It was the reluctant decision in 1979 to intervene in Afghanistan—the last Soviet move in the “Great Game”—that broke the camel’s back. Eight months after the completion of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and with it, the Empire crumbled.

## **The millennium bug**

In a quote attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian observed that his home country is “not a third world nation, but a highly developed civilization in an advanced state of decay.” This comment aptly describes the Russian/Soviet state at the end of the twentieth century. The fall of Soviet civilization was part of a greater historical force, the decline of the modernist script. The demise of the Warsaw Pact, the USSR, and eventually Russia as a superpower, was dictated by the breakup of the very infrastructure of Russian/Soviet modernity, including the obsolete industry, the paternalistic social security system, the unwieldy Army and disproportionate defense sector, the unsustainable administrative-territorial format, and the imperial foreign policy. As Robert Cooper has put it,

the Soviet Union seemed in 1989 rather old-fashioned: an empire after other empires were gone, a state-centered system which had once seemed progressive but no longer was—and a state orientated for defense and war long after the threat had gone and others had changed their focus.<sup>41</sup>

The 500-year period of modernity in Russia, along with concomitant institutions of territoriality, industrialism and imperialism, had totally exhausted itself by the end of the twentieth century. The infrastructure of modernity is falling apart, from decommissioned nuclear submarines rotting at piers near Murmansk to the *Mir* space station dumped into the Pacific near Fiji; from defeats of the once-mighty Russian hockey team to the dilapidated classical facades of St. Petersburg as the city celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2003. For Russia, the “millennium bug” was not just the obsolete computer code—in fact, many computers in Russian industry were pre-DOS mainframes, put into operation before 1980 and therefore not affected by the Y2K problem—but the systemic incompatibility of the country with the new millennium.

The last two decades of Soviet and Russian politics are best understood in the context of this gap. Yuri Andropov’s 1982 reformist attempt, informed by increasing awareness of the crisis within the KGB leadership, was carried out in the typical Soviet style: tightening of Party control, discipline at the workplace, and an increase in internal repression. Like the terminally-ill, reformist *gensek*, this attempt was short-lived. Following the brief, inarticulate and almost caricature interregnum of Konstantin Chernenko in 1983-1984, another attempt at reform was undertaken by Mikhail Gorbachev, who came to power in 1985.

Gorbachev, from the younger generation of regional leaders and a contrast to the Kremlin’s ailing gerontocracy, was well aware of the crisis. Still, he probably never realized its proportions nor its structural character. A loyal Communist, his original reformist project was one of a facelift—“socialism with a human face.”<sup>42</sup> Only in 1987 was Gorbachev’s initial phraseology, *uskorenie* (acceleration) of socialism, replaced by the more fundamental notion of *perestroika* (restructuring).



*Perestroika* was an attempt at a conservative evolution of the Soviet regime without a change in the basics of the political and social order; at preserving socialism by a partial introduction of market mechanisms, limited political freedoms, and considerable freedom of speech (*glasnost*). Gorbachev never intended to overhaul the foundations of Russian/Soviet modernity: the big state, the role of the Party and the military, and a centralized federation.

His evolutionary approach to reform could be likened to the “Chinese model” of gradual economic change along with the preservation of the political control—but the big difference lay in the fact that late Soviet society was principally different from the Chinese one: it was urbanized, industrialized, fully literate, much more open and informed, and in its urban segments, generally sharing Western values and consumer behavior.<sup>43</sup>

***For Russia, the “millennium bug” was not just the obsolete computer code, but the systemic incompatibility of the country with the new millennium.***

Soviet modernization, especially the social contract of the Brezhnev years, had produced a Soviet “middle class” of sorts—30 to 40 million urban professionals, educated and relatively well-to-do, constrained by a hierarchical sociopolitical system. These people were the original supporters of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, but by the late 1980s they had realized they wanted more than Gorbachev’s modest reforms could offer. The irony of the situation was that the very forces evoked by *perestroika*—the liberal wing of the establishment, the educated urban class, the national elites in the Soviet Republics—had outgrown Gorbachev’s project, and demanded greater social, political and economic freedom and, in some cases, national sovereignty.

If Gorbachev had followed the “Chinese model,” he could have attempted a “Soviet Tiananmen,” a demonstrative use of force that would have guaranteed the continuity of power and delineated the

borders of political liberalization. But the last Soviet *gensek* lived up to his proclaimed moral ground and refrained from using force, eventually opening the floodgates for the Soviet breakup and securing his place in history as a utopian reformer, not a modernizing tyrant. Indeed, armed force was used not *by* Gorbachev, but *against* him, in the August 1991 coup, and failed spectacularly.

The failure of *perestroika* and collapse of the Soviet Union brought to power Gorbachev's nemesis, Boris Yeltsin. His nickname, "Bulldozer," earned during his years as Party secretary in the Sverdlovsk *oblast*, reflected his tendency to dismantle all obstacles in his way—a trait that also characterized his reformist project in the early 1990s. Following Soviet modernity's failure to evolve, Yeltsin's way forward (and the way to power) was revolutionary destruction. The dismantlement started in 1989 under Gorbachev, with the elimination of the branch ministries in the Soviet economy; it continued with the collapse of the Soviet imperial structures in Eastern Europe in 1989-1990; and was followed by Yeltsin's abolition of the USSR, the Communist Party and the KGB in 1991, his destruction of the socialist economy with "shock therapy" in 1992, and his outlawing of the Soviets in his war with the Supreme Soviet in 1993. Not just the economy, but the entire Russian/Soviet modernity was treated with "shock therapy." Yeltsin's anti-communist revolution of the early 1990s was a demolition of the structures of Russian/Soviet modernity, a perpetual crisis management in which Yeltsin himself excelled and survived against all odds.

The attempted revolution ended with an Eliotian "whimper" and dissolved in an inherent Russian entropy. The end of Yeltsin's first presidential term (1994-1996) and his entire second term (1996-1999) were plagued by incompetence: a mismanaged and eventually lost war in Chechnya and the emergence of a corrupt oligarchic regime. The nation faced an atomized, but still

paternalistic society; a ruined, partly de-industrialized but largely unreformed economy; a decentralized but unsustainable federation; and a pluralistic but illiberal polity. In the end, Yeltsin had failed to address the key problem of Russian modernity: the big, corrupted state.

Still, two unsuccessful exit strategies attempted from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Gorbachev's evolution and Yeltsin's revolution, instilled awareness of a systemic crisis and of the necessity for structural change. The strategies had questioned the tenets of Russia's modern self-perception as a superpower and a territorial giant, and initiated a critical reassessment of Russia's role in world affairs. Various intellectual parties had provided different responses, from integration to isolationism, from liberalism to Eurasianism, but there had been a shared sentiment that from *shaping* the world, Russia should turn to *adapting* to the external environment. At modernity's end, Russia faced the challenge of adapting to globalization.

This was the agenda of Vladimir Putin, the new leader who was symbolically anointed president by the outgoing Boris Yeltsin on the last day of the past millennium, 31 December 1999. Analyzing Putin's agenda, Peter Rutland observed that his task was

to adapt the Russian state to the challenges of the global environment: to "customize" global practices and requirements to suit Russian conditions. . . . All around the world, national leaders have been struggling to protect vulnerable social groups and preserve national cultures while adapting to the competitive pressures of the global marketplace. In the East, it led to the opening of China and sparked the "Asian values" debate. In the West, it caused liberals and socialists to embrace free trade and fiscal conservatism. The "Putin enigma" can be understood as part of an arc of political transformation that stretches from Mohammed Mohatir and Deng Xiaoping to Tony Blair and Bill Clinton.<sup>44</sup>

Strategies of adaptation are crucial for understanding the Putin project and the attendant change in Russian foreign policy. Foreign policy emerges as the key area of transformation, positioned between the modern, statist background and the postmodern global setting. **Part Two** of the essay is devoted to the analysis of Russian foreign policy at the point of exit from modernity.

## **PART II. The Changing Landmarks of Foreign Policy**

### **Imperatives of globalization**

The complexity of Russia's transformation blurs the methodological border between domestic and foreign policy, the inside and the outside. Internal actors, challenges and constraints increasingly set the foreign policy agenda, while the external environment increasingly shapes domestic identities and responses. In this fluid environment, the meaning of security is changing in Russia, moving from its modern, statist understanding to new pluralistic discourses, stressing individual and group security and global interdependence. Globalization has arrived in Russia in unpredictable, and at times uncomfortable ways, defining new imperatives for Russia's world view, national interest, security strategy and foreign policy.

#### **a. Resource imperative**

Much of Russia's modern history has been about the acquisition, control and maintenance of resources, including the landmass (which also meant strategic depth), size of the population, natural resources, and industrial and technological potential. The rituals of national security were rooted in the mythology of "inexhaustible" resources, as demonstrated by defeat of the Poles in the seventeenth century, the Swedes in the eighteenth, the French in the nineteenth, and the Germans in the twentieth centuries. Especially in the latter two instances, key factors were territorial depth, severity of the climate, and mobilization of large masses of the population, including local resistance to invaders in the case of Napoleon in the nineteenth century and Germany in the twentieth century. The strategic

standoff during the Cold War, too, was to a large extent a contest in resources.

At the end of modernity, Russia faces a double challenge. Firstly, resources turned out to be finite. The linear growth of quantitative factors—size of territory, industry, military expenditure, *etc.*—had natural limits, and had become unsustainable by the late Soviet period. With the breakup of the USSR, the Russian Federation retained about 60% of its territory and a little over 50% of its population. In the years since the breakup, the Russian armed forces have been reduced to less than a third of the former Soviet Army, and Russia's share in the world GDP has fallen from 8 to 1.5%.<sup>45</sup> Even if Russia manages to sustain the current annual economic growth of 4 to 5%, increasing her share to 2% of the world GDP is the best to be hoped for over the next 10 to 15 years. In military terms, Russia not only spends less on defense than any major NATO nation, but also less than China, India or Japan. Russian foreign and security policy is experiencing an environmental crisis of sorts; it is not sustainable given the limits of growth and the scarcity of physical resources.

Secondly, the meaning of resources has changed in today's world, and many of Russia's traditional assets have lost significance. One example is Russia's strategic nuclear forces (SNF). Theoretically, Russia is still able to maintain her nuclear arsenal, but with each passing year, it is becoming more costly. Today, the SNF account for about 15% of the defense budget, but in just a decade they may consume up to 50% of the defense expenditure, to the detriment of the conventional forces.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, the mere possession of nuclear arms by Russia, be it 1,500, 3,500 or 5,000 warheads, did not prevent NATO's war in Yugoslavia in 1999, a Chechen incursion into Daghestan later the same year, or the taking of 800 hostages in Moscow by Chechen terrorists in October, 2002. This, in turn, raises the issue of the quality and adequacy of Russia's resources in world politics. Too

many of them are based in traditional “hard power” and too few, in “soft power” (economic leverage, political alliances, or diplomatic activity).

As a matter of fact, as traditional power resources fail to successfully address challenges, Russia’s major foreign policy asset turns out to be of a virtual, psychological nature. There is a certain Russia-archetype, Russia-mythology, in the West, a profoundly geopolitical imagination of Russia. Occupying vast, unimaginable expanses on the eastern fringes of Europe, over the centuries Russia has turned into a psychological problem for the West. The unpredictable Russian space, with steppes and Tartars, Tsars and the GULAG, has always been off limits for Western rationalism. Brewing chaos and trouble, Russia aroused an anxiety complex in the Western psyche that eventually buried Russia deep into the subconsciousness of the West.<sup>47</sup> In redressing the perennial opposition between Us and Them, the Ego and the Id, West and East, Europe and Asia, the West makes a symbolic investment of its fear of the Other in the mythical space of Russia, imagining Russia as a geopolitical rival even as this country is experiencing economic and military decline.

***For the first time in modern history, Russia does not have the resources to match her traditional global role.***

One example is a story of a small Russian reconnaissance ship *Liman*—a 30-year-old, 60-man electronic spying vessel from the Black Sea Fleet, a converted fishing boat, carrying eavesdropping gear but no rockets, that was dispatched to the Adriatic with an intelligence mission in the early days of the 1999 NATO war in Kosovo. For several days, a small ship was making big waves, staying in the limelight of the global media as a token of “Russia’s response” to NATO attacks. One could not fail to notice the stark contrast between the inflated geopolitical expectations and images of Russia’s traditional military power and the modest size and

mission of the ship, which disappeared from the front pages soon after its passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

Other than the residual psychological levers, for the first time in her modern history, Russia does not have the resources to match her traditional global role. However, the change in foreign policy has been too profound to explain it by the simple reasons of resource scarcity; even if, hypothetically, Russia reclaimed the resources comparable to those controlled by the Soviet Union at the peak of its power, her foreign policy would have fundamentally differed from the Soviet one. The transformation concerns the deep grammar of Russian foreign policy, and is primarily driven by domestic concerns.

## **b. Domestic imperative**

Geopolitical reasoning had always been the central part of Russia's internal regime, subordinating domestic politics and dictating the mobilization of domestic resources. Very often, foreign policy goals would dictate a softening or a hardening of the internal regime. In short, this was a country catering to its external mission.

The situation started to change in the late 1980s, and especially after the breakup of the Soviet Union, as domestic concerns became prevalent and foreign policy, ancillary. The changing attitude was formulated by Alexander Solzhenitsyn who, in his 1990 "tentative proposal," *Rebuilding Russia*, spoke of the necessity to "concentrate" the nation, abandoning far-reaching foreign policy designs for the sake of internal development.<sup>48</sup>

There are two main factors underlying the "domestication" of Russian foreign policy: a mental change and a regime change. Psychologically, there has been a partial deterritorialization of the post-Soviet mind. Before, the average Soviet citizen took special



pride in the fact that the USSR's territory constituted "one sixth of the world's landmass," as official propaganda put it, and identified him/herself with the territorial grandeur and integrity. As a series of crises unfolded in the 1980s and 1990s, the territory began to lose its sacred meaning and started to be looked upon in functional terms: is it useful, cost-effective and sustainable?

Obviously, this is still a trend going against the grain of 500 years of territorial thinking, but some observations from the 1990s are indicative. For instance, public sentiment showed an overwhelming equanimity with respect to the loss of "traditionally Russian" territories like Crimea or North Kazakhstan with the breakup of the USSR in 1991. Likewise, the electorate was generally willing to "give up" Chechnya in exchange for peace during the first Chechen war in 1994-1996. Finally, the elites and the wider public have been unwilling to bear the economic cost of reunification with the "brother people" of Belarus in the past years.

Secondly, the past decade's transformation entailed the emergence of a specific national capitalism, permeated by economic interests and pressure groups, and largely integrated into the global market. Russia's entire transition, including privatization, democratization and social change, was "appropriated" by powerful economic groups like the oil and gas industry, the banking and financial elite, the metal industry, the defense sector, the industrial-nuclear complex and a few others. These groups, along with the security agencies (*siloviki*) and the state bureaucracy, are setting the new rules of the game. In this sense, Russian foreign policy is mostly "objective," defined by internal economic variables and a pronounced domestic interest in preserving the new rules of the game. Even if economic interests

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***The backbone of Russia's integration into the world economy is truba ("the pipe"), making her essentially a "petro-state."***

are not always directly translated into foreign policy acts (*e.g.*, in Russian foreign policy towards the Caspian region or towards Iraq), they create a de-ideologized, pragmatic context of policy-making, rendering Russian foreign policy more predictable. Gazprom's strategic interests in Western markets may not directly shape Russian foreign policy, but paraphrasing the old adage about General Motors, "what is good for Gazprom is good for Russia."

### **c. Economic imperative**

Parallel to the "domestication," Russian foreign policy has been substantially "economized" in the past decade. This is not an entirely new phenomenon. Ever since the decision to export oil to the West in 1958 and gas in the early 1970s, the Soviet Union had been a prime exporter of oil and other raw materials on the world market. The production of nuclear and chemical weapons, the precarious functioning of the late Soviet economy, Brezhnev's "social contract" and stagnant domestic stability were purchased with petrodollars, some \$200 billion earned from oil exports between 1973 and 1985 alone.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the Soviet Union had long been an exporter of capital. Soviet support of the communist regimes or trade between COMECON countries based on distorted prices can be seen as an indirect form of capital outflow.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, Soviet foreign policy had been at least partially guided by external trade patterns, if not contingent on the economic imperatives (certainly not at home!)

After the Soviet collapse, the economic variable became prominent in foreign policy. The Russian economy has been much more closely integrated into the global market through various interfaces from the state level to increasingly the private level, from the trade in oil and raw materials to the mass consumption of imported goods, capital flight or the export of human capital. The difference from the Soviet period is the extent of domestic political commitment to external trade; at stake are not just the interests of

the constitutive elites of the regime, such as the oil and banking sectors, but the new social contract involving the mass consumer, the shuttle trader (*chelnok*) making shopping runs across the border, the travel agent and his clients—in short, a new post-Soviet vibrant class that has made the transition and the economic recovery possible and that can only operate in the open economy.

The backbone of Russia's integration into the world economy is *truba* ("the pipe"), making her essentially a "petro-state."<sup>51</sup> The broadly understood petro-sector accounts for about 40% of federal government revenues and 25% of the GDP.<sup>52</sup> Russia is the world's third largest oil producer and second largest exporter. She has 33% of the world's natural gas reserves and provides 40% of Europe's natural gas needs.<sup>53</sup> Since September 2001, Russia has been regularly invited to attend OPEC meetings, as that organization struggles to coordinate a global reduction in production. Among those nations not belonging to OPEC, Russia is considered a key force in influencing world prices for oil.

Other forms of interdependence include the return of Western investors to the rejuvenated Russian stock market (RTS), which has fully recovered from the shock of August 1998 and performed impressively in 2002 and 2003 against the backdrop of global recession; capital export from Russia at the rate of \$15-\$20 billion per year (in 2002-2003 the rate is estimated to have declined to under \$1 billion per month); and export of human capital. One should mention a crucial social role played by the import of fast-moving consumer goods (20 major regions import about 40% of all goods)<sup>54</sup> and unique models of cross-border trade providing employment and daily subsistence for millions of people in border territories, particularly in the Far East and Northwestern Russia.

#### **d. Institutional imperative**

The new Russian foreign policy is staged against a backdrop of increasing global and regional integration and the emergence of international institutions as key actors in world affairs. Russian identity politics differ from post-Communist transitions in most of Eastern and Central Europe where policies of integration are driven by an identity deficit, fear of the East and aspirations for the West. By contrast, in Russia there is no perceived necessity of, or indeed a domestic consensus about, the integration of the country. Rather, Russia has to position herself with respect to the integration outside her borders. In the past decade, Russian foreign policy has been increasingly conceived and executed in terms of international organizations, resulting in the institutionalization of Russian foreign policy thinking.

This situation is new, compared to modern Russian and Soviet history. Russia, a quintessential sovereign, had never pursued integration; politics ranged from conquest and incorporation (into the Russian Empire or into the USSR) to imperial domination (within the Warsaw Pact and/or COMECON). The integration in the post-World War II world was happening beyond, in spite of, and often against the Soviet Union.

In a major policy change, in the first years after the collapse of the USSR, Russia sought to join various international institutions. In May 1992 Russia joined the IMF and in June 1992, the World Bank. At that time, the ideas of EU and NATO membership for Russia were aired in the highest echelons of power in Russia. In February 1996 Russia joined the Council of Europe, and in May 1997 the Russia-NATO Founding Act was signed in Paris, producing a unique formula of 16+1 (19+1 as three new members joined NATO in March 1999), which at the Rome summit in May 2002 was replaced by the formula “at 20.” In December 1997, following three years of disputes over the war in Chechnya, the EU

and Russia enacted the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Russia is currently in the final stage of accession talks to WTO, after which she is planning to apply for OECD membership. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 and her response to the global war on terrorism, Russia, with support from President Bush, has improved her standing within the G8.

Post-Soviet institutions offer additional examples. Although the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was initially conceived as merely an “instrument of civilized divorce” of the former Soviet republics, it inaugurated a multilateral framework, along with the 1992 Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security. Albeit loose and non-binding, this framework has become an important vehicle for Russian foreign policy. Even before the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Russia started using the CIS for promoting her role as a Eurasian regional leader in the fight against terrorism. For example, Russia inaugurated the CIS Anti-Terrorist Center.<sup>55</sup>

Even when external integration and institutions were perceived to be against Russia's interest, Russia maintained an institutional dialogue under the most adverse circumstances, as was the case with NATO. On the one hand, the two waves of NATO enlargement and the war in Kosovo have largely alienated Russian public opinion from the West. But on the other hand, these contentious issues have created a unique NATO-Russia institutional framework, which, paradoxically, became one of Russia's key interfaces with the West. Despite multiple differences, Russia was engaged in North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and Partnership for Peace (PfP); in the Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia, and in Kosovo Force (KFOR); in the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) and currently in the NATO-Russia Council. Through the 1990s, there was a continuous NATO-Russia institutional buildup; in fact, much of Russia's relations with the West were conceived within, and channeled into, multilateral

structures. The NATO-Russia interaction illustrated a paradigm shift in Russian security thinking: while in the old (modern) pattern, Russia deplored her alleged strategic losses, in the new institutional pattern she experienced the policy of multilateral partnership, even without the prospect of membership.

The institutional imperative is also a normative imperative, since most of the integration to which Russia is exposed occurs within the West, and is part of the Western moral hegemony, a new normative discourse of power. Russia's stated adherence to the values of democracy has little to do with her liberal idealism of the early 1990s, but rather is a pragmatic approach in which accepting dominant Western norms has a long-term strategic value, a means of advancing the national interest.

## **The 1990s: A catastrophe that wasn't**

There are many ways to look at Russian foreign policy of the past decade. Realist die-hards in the West and traditional Russia-critics in countries of the former Soviet empire see Russia's policy as a strategic retreat, a regrouping of forces during a period of decline, just to re-emerge later in her habitual, imperial self. Among other things, they cite two wars in Chechnya, assertiveness in the "near abroad," and Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement. A new school of Russia-skeptics emerged in the late 1990s, partly in response to the August 1998 financial crisis, and the Bank of New York scandal later the same year. This initiated a "who lost Russia" debate (especially aimed against the Russia-policy of the outgoing Clinton administration—see *e.g.* the Cox Commission Report to the US Congress in September 2000). Some even contemplated the possibility of a "world without Russia."<sup>56</sup>

Still, much depends on the perspective of the beholder. A series of crises at the turn of the century may have been bad news, but change in Russia in the past eleven years should also be judged in comparison with 50 years of the Cold War, 70 years of Soviet Communism, 300 years of the Russian Empire, and 500 years of Russian modernity. In this metahistorical perspective, the transformation in Russian foreign policy amounts to no less than a revolution, one that occurred without war, occupation, or incorporation into a dominant international regime, as happened in Germany or Japan after World War II. The “silent revolution” was not quite intended by most internal actors, nor has it yet been conceptualized by professional Russia-watchers.

The intellectual precursor of this revolution was Gorbachev’s “New Thinking.” It came too early; it came laden with neo-Communist rhetoric; and it was not matched by adequate domestic reform. Gorbachev’s project failed, but despite a series of domestic crises and diplomatic collisions with the West which followed, Russia has never veered off the course chosen in the late Gorbachev and early Yeltsin periods; she has stayed within the broad framework of cooperation with the West. Major adjustments of foreign policy have certainly taken place, especially with regard to the national-interest discourse, and to the ideas of *derzhavnost’* (a “great power” stance), but the outlines of foreign and security policy have remained unchanged through the 1990s, as Russia increasingly opened up to various forms of dialogue, norms and institutions.

Painful as it was, Russia’s post-imperial transformation has been surprisingly stable, especially compared to what had been predicted in the early and mid-1990s.<sup>57</sup> Recalling these doomsday scenarios, it is interesting to define Russian foreign policy through what it was *not*. Isolation from the West and revision of arms control agreements, obstruction of international institutions and neo-imperialism in the CIS, power projection in the Baltic states

and East Central Europe, risky schemes in the Third World (like proliferation of WMD) and other calamities forecasted and anticipated in the West were actually never entertained in Moscow as feasible policy options. From a Realist point of view, Russia's policy of the 1990s had been truly disappointing. Russia pursued no "grand strategies," no Gromyko-type power brokering, no nuclear escapades: nothing but retrenchment, adaptation and pragmatism. A surprise night rush of 200 Russian paratroopers from SFOR in Bosnia to the Pristina airport in Kosovo ahead of NATO forces in June 1999 was probably the high point of Russia's defiance of the West.

In other words, there had been a discrepancy between the West's expectations of trouble on the Russia front (exacerbated by a series of disputes, *e.g.* over NATO enlargement and the war in Kosovo) that conceivably could have prompted Russia's hostility and a much more innocuous reality, perpetually returning to the mundane business of negotiating IMF loans and Russia's debt rollover.

In the 1990s, relations between Russia and the West had withstood several demanding tests, each of which had inadvertently added positive value, reaffirming the mechanisms of cooperation. The longest of these tests was the first wave of NATO enlargement, designed and debated between 1993 and 1997. The long and painful bargaining with Russia and within the Atlantic Alliance, resulting in Russia's grudging consent and in the May 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, was often interpreted as a geopolitical zero-sum game which Russia had "lost." However, in the terms of institutional politics, the outcome was not so simple. In spite of Russia's protests and unenthusiastic consent to the enlargement, the whole debate had created a unique institutional framework allowing Russia a bigger place and voice in European affairs. With the cooperation of leading NATO actors, Russia had become a major variable in the enlargement story—indeed, in



European security at large. What mattered here was not the result (enlargement in spite of Russia), but the process through which Russia became engaged.

Further into the decade, relations between Russia and the West took further “crash tests,” including the August 1998 financial crisis in Russia and the 1999 NATO war in Kosovo. As far as the 1998 crisis is concerned, the financial collapse highlighted the overall systemic crisis in Russia and indicated the limited domestic resources for the projection of “national interests” in foreign policy. The crisis was precipitated by the “Asian flu” (the escape of portfolio investors from the emerging markets) and a dramatic fall in the world oil prices to levels

below Russia’s production costs. Thus it not only defined the parameters of decreasing state capacity in Russia, but also underscored Russia’s growing dependence on the global financial and raw materials markets. Russia found herself integrated into the world economy to a greater, and

***The transformation in Russian foreign policy amounts to no less than a revolution, one that occurred without war, occupation, or incorporation into a dominant international regime.***

riskier, extent than had been envisaged by the masterminds of the Soviet oil policy in the 1970s and 1980s and by the architects of the Russian financial markets in the 1990s. The 1998 crisis emphasized the fact that Russian foreign policy is staged under the conditions of limited economic sovereignty of the nation.

It is remarkable that despite the early fears and serious fallout for the Western investors, the 1998 crisis did not derail the entire framework of Russia’s relations with the West, nor did it seriously destabilize Russian domestic politics. On the contrary, the crisis accelerated structural reform of the Russian economy, ridding it of a large part of parasitical financial institutions, giving the ruble a realistic valuation, stimulating import substitution and supporting

domestic industry. By spring 1999, the economy had been showing early signs of recovery and cooperation with the International Financial Institutions had resumed.

While the 1998 crisis had shown the limits of Russia's economic sovereignty, the 1999 war in Kosovo marked the limits of Russian foreign policy, which now had to be positioned within a dominant global discourse, the "New World Order." On the one hand, the Kosovo war had caused some immediate damage in Russia's relationship with the West. It provided a basis for the consolidation of the Russian political class and a large part of the population on an anti-Western platform, playing directly into the hands of the Communists and nationalists. Acts of protest in March and April 1999 included spontaneous mass demonstrations at the US embassy in Moscow, recruiting volunteers to fight in Serbia, and threats (voiced mainly in the State Duma) to supply arms to Milosevic and to re-target Russian tactical nuclear missiles to NATO countries.

However, by May 1999 the nationalist fever had all but calmed down. Admitting to the impossibility of opposing the West or halting NATO bombing, Russia had taken a sensible wait-and-see approach, criticizing NATO's action, and gradually resuming cooperation with the West—both in brokering the Kosovo peace deal and in financial matters. At the end of the day, Russia proved disinclined to neo-imperialist temptations and remained unlikely to slide into isolationism and confrontation with the West even under the most adverse circumstances. Russia was disturbed but not displaced. An ailing giant was certainly irritated, but did not care to move.

The events of the 1990s showed the limited role of the Russian state with regard to transnational forces, be they the global financial markets or an expanding NATO. The 1998 financial crisis highlighted Russia's economic dependence, while NATO

enlargement and the 1999 Kosovo war showed Russia's geopolitical predicament. In other words, the 1998 crisis demonstrated that Russia is irresistibly drawn (or "seduced") into the world of geo-economy, and NATO enlargement and the Kosovo war illustrated that Russia is losing her traditional role in the world of geopolitics. Taken together, these developments mapped Russia's gradual drift from geopolitics to geo-economy. This move is far from complete but it has already progressed far enough to keep Russia anchored in a cooperative framework at the margin of Western institutions and to guarantee against the temptations of isolationism and confrontation.<sup>58</sup>

## **Putin's new course**

In the new millennium, two major factors have shaped relations between Russia and the West. First was Vladimir Putin's accession to power in Russia. (He served as prime minister beginning in August 1999, as acting president beginning in January 2000, and as elected president since May 2000). He has pursued radical economic and administrative reform at home and rapprochement with the West in foreign policy. The second factor was the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States and the onset of the global war on terrorism, which so far has been defining the presidency of George W. Bush.

At the beginning, Putin appeared by no means a likely candidate to pursue the policies of rapprochement. A KGB veteran whose sky-rocketing popularity at home was boosted by the second war in Chechnya, his accession to power was met with wide skepticism in the West, especially as far as foreign policy was concerned. But as months went by, much to the surprise of observers, Putin started pursuing a vigorous policy of cooperation with Europe and the United States.

Putin's foreign policy agenda has been dictated by domestic concerns, an awareness of the systemic crisis (after all, the default of August 1998 was only one year in the past), and a sense of the competitive pressures of globalization. His approach was based on a link between domestic and foreign policy: Putin needed to ensure Western support for domestic reforms, creating a friendly and predictable external environment and showing Russia to be a trustworthy actor in world affairs.

By this, he could follow up on Russian foreign policy's "silent revolution" of the 1990s. Ambiguous and incomplete as it was, this revolution provided a set of institutional and psychological bonds between Russia and the West. Overcoming ambiguity, Putin aimed at anchoring Russia firmly within the West and abandoning the rhetoric of a "multipolar world," an official Russian foreign policy discourse in previous years. Putin's course crystallized the evolution of Russia's foreign policy since 1992 towards a pragmatic centrist consensus—with 'Russia-First' as the objective and active engagement as the means.<sup>59</sup>

Putin's policy of opening up towards the West extended over a broad range of issues, crossing all lines in the sand and making concessions that were hitherto unimaginable—from dismissing the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in late 2001 as "no threat to Russian security" to taking a reserved attitude towards the second wave of NATO enlargement in 2004. In sensitive areas of the "near abroad," Putin did not raise objections to US troops stationed in Central Asia to wage war in Afghanistan in 2001 or to the dispatch of US special forces to Georgia in 2002 to train and equip local troops for counter-terrorism operations. In further areas of former geopolitical

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rivalry, Russia withdrew from strategically insignificant but symbolically important military bases in Cam Rahn, Vietnam, and Lourdes, Cuba, in 2001.

Relations with the European Union and especially Russian views on European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), initially somewhat suspicious, have been improving since the Paris Summit of October 2000. A compromise solution on Kaliningrad, which Russia and EU reached at the Copenhagen Summit in November 2002, signaled Russia's readiness to abandon a purely geopolitical interpretation of Kaliningrad, a key security area, for the sake of wider dialogue with the EU. (According to the agreement, Russian citizens will need transit visas to travel from the "mainland" into the exclave through the territory of the future EU member, Lithuania).

An even more significant change has taken place in NATO-Russia relations during Putin's presidency, as symbolized by Russia's consent to the second wave of NATO enlargement, which included the Baltic states. After restoring full dialogue with NATO in February 2000, during the Russian-Finnish summit in Helsinki in April 2001, Putin stated that although integration of the Baltic states into NATO would not increase regional stability, such a decision was a sovereign right of each individual nation. Later the same year, he indicated to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson that, while disapproving of NATO enlargement into the Baltic states, he would not invest any political capital into opposing this move.<sup>60</sup> In 2002, NATO-Russia rapprochement was further enhanced at the Reykjavik summit of May 14-15, while the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in Rome on May 28, 2002 integrated Russia into NATO structures and decision-making as fully as possible short of actual membership.<sup>61</sup> The first meeting of the Council "at 20" between Russia and 19 NATO nations took place in Moscow in May 2003.

A more formidable challenge for Putin's new course had been presented by the Iraq conundrum: the buildup to the war; the diplomacy at the UN Security Council in late 2002 and early 2003; and the war itself in late March and April 2003. On the surface, it seemed that Russia had given up the post-9/11 strategic partnership with the United States (and ruined a newly discovered friendship between Putin and Britain's Tony Blair in the process) by joining forces with France and Germany in staunch opposition to use of military force in Iraq. However, Putin was performing a much more complex balancing act. On the one hand, he was trying to appeal to an overwhelmingly anti-war and anti-American Russian electorate, to appease Russia's security elite which had become outright hostile to the US, and to appear to be in solidarity with Germany and France. On the other hand, he strove to preserve the basics of the strategic relationship with the US.

Indeed, Putin has succeeded in walking a fine line. He saved face at home and in Europe by opposing the war, but also stayed within limits of what the US seemed ready to tolerate. Despite all the brouhaha around the expected Franco-Russian veto in the Security Council, Russia was never really going to spearhead the veto motion and indicated so to the United States. On the contrary, much less publicized visits by foreign policy masterminds Alexander Voloshin to Washington and Condoleezza Rice to Moscow during the peak of the war in Iraq served to patch up the torn fabric of the relationship. A symbolic "reconciliation" occurred at the Putin-Bush summit in St. Petersburg in May 2003 where both leaders reconfirmed the long-term value of US-Russian partnership.

The turning points of Putin's new course were the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the US-led war on terrorism. These events opened new, as yet unforeseen, avenues for cooperation between Russia and the West. Putin's support for the United States in the past two years ranged from the telephone call to President Bush in

the first hours after the attack to express Russia's solidarity with the United States to diplomatic support of the US war in Afghanistan; from non-interference in a security relationship of the United States with Central Asia (until recently considered Russia's "soft underbelly") to US-Russian reconciliation after the war in Iraq. The terrorist attack in Moscow in late October 2002, when a group of Chechen suicide bombers held about 800 people hostage at the *Nord-Ost* musical, has further strengthened Russia's alignment with the war on terrorism and strategic partnership with the US. (Europe's reaction to Russia's hostage rescue operation in which over 120 hostages as well as all terrorists were killed was much more mixed).

As a matter of fact, Putin's policy of rapprochement started *before* September 11th and accelerated in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States. Having been through two wars in Chechnya and having opposed Islamic extremism on the Tajik-Afghan border for a decade, 9/11 hardly changed anything in Russia's appreciation of security threats and desired partners; rather, it became a "moment of truth" for the West, which came to realize the change that had been incrementally taking place in Russia over the past decade. As Dov Lynch has put it,

On 11 September, Western interests changed; Russia's didn't. Putin's bid to anchor Russia into the Euro-Atlantic community started before the terrorist attacks. 11 September served, first, to accelerate the pace of Russian movement and, second, to ease the West's receptivity to Russian advances. . . . The global war on terrorism has represented an opportunity for Moscow to ally itself with the Euro-Atlantic community around a common, and thankfully vague, threat. Russian differences with the West have not gone away; simply, Putin has decided that they are best resolved with Russia comfortably inside the tent rather than with one foot jammed in the doorway.<sup>62</sup>

## Which West to join?

The current policy of rapprochement reopens the perennial question of Russia's relationship to the West. A key problem between Russia and the West has always been the incongruity and asynchronicity of development on both sides. For most of her modern history, at least since Peter the Great, Russia has been trailing and emulating the West. The Russian periphery of Europe, remote yet engaged, jealous of the West yet proud of itself, has always embarked upon belated modernization: trying to catch up, but arriving too late.

Putin's westward movement is yet another in a series of reforms undertaken every several decades in an attempt to close the gap between civilizations. The effects of reform have been particularly noticeable in Russia's foreign and security policy. As a result of the "silent revolution" in foreign policy over the past fifteen years, and of Putin's strategic realignment, Russia is evolving towards a Western security community which Robert Cooper has called a postmodern system, "the post-imperial, postmodern states who no longer think of security primarily in terms of conquest."<sup>63</sup> Is there a possibility of a rare moment of convergence between Russia and the West, based on a common understanding of security?

**Today, the question is, which West does Russia want to be: the West of Hobbes or the West of Kant?**

Such optimism may be premature. As Russia is shedding the institutional and psychological structures of imperialism and modernity in an attempt to align with the "postmodern West," the West has unexpectedly turned out to be not quite so postmodern after all and no longer a monolithic whole. This became evident at the beginning of the new millennium, largely in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as two vastly different security polities have taken shape in Europe and the United States.



Russia is suddenly facing a transatlantic divide, created by different political cultures and diverging social paths in Europe and the United States. According to an often quoted line by Robert Kagan, “Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus:”

Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a post-historical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace.’ The United States, meanwhile, remains mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable and where true security and the defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might.<sup>64</sup>

The divide in strategic cultures, accentuated by 9/11 and different approaches to war on terrorism, can be conceptualized in terms of modern and postmodern. US security discourses are still firmly based on the modern understanding of state sovereignty, borders, and foreign policy as the projection of force. The epitome of the US belief in sovereignty and physical impenetrability of the national body is the plan for the National Missile Defense, an essentially modern project of resistance against challenges from a globalizing world.

While United States is at war, Europe remains largely at peace: across the ocean, the EU polity is predominantly post-modern, post-sovereign and post-heroic—based on the “rejection of force,”<sup>65</sup> and indeed on a rejection of indigenous foreign policy as such. With the exception of France and Britain, European states are increasingly displaying the propensity to “outsource” their foreign and security policy to the US. The European criticisms of the excesses of US power are therefore largely misguided, as

Europeans seem to miss the paradox: that their passage into post-history has depended on the United States not making the same passage. Meanwhile, “Americans apparently feel no resentment at not being able to enter a ‘postmodern’ utopia.”<sup>66</sup>

This difference was put in even starker relief by the failure of the idealistic project of the 1990s in the United States symbolized by President Bill Clinton and by the politics of informationalism, globalization, democratization and Wilsonian liberalism. As the “New Economy” bubble burst on Wall Street and the towers of the World Trade Center came tumbling down a few blocks away, the US was left with the naked truth of national interest, and with power politics as the immediate means.

The transatlantic rift may not run as deep as some alarmists suggest (see *e.g.* Charles Kupchan’s “End of the West”<sup>67</sup>), especially considering the existential unity of the Western civilization rooted in the common values and beliefs that will probably never allow for a “continental drift” of irreversible, tectonic proportions—but there is no denying the global bifurcation into a Hobbesian world of modernity and a Kantian world of postmodernity. This leaves Russia, seeking her own exits from modernity and a common ground with the West, with an uncomfortable dilemma. More than a century ago, in a poetic comment on Russia’s quest of the East, the Russian poet and philosopher Vladimir Soloviev asked Russia,

*O Rus’! In lofty premonition  
You ponder a proud idea;  
Which East do you want to be:  
The East of Xerxes or of Christ?*<sup>68</sup>

Soloviev referred to the choice between two faces of the East: Asian despotism represented by Xerxes and Oriental spirituality

symbolized by Jesus. Today, however, the question is, *which West* does Russia want to be: the West of Hobbes or the West of Kant?

The answer is ambiguous. Russia does not seem prepared—nor is she willing—to make a final choice, and prefers playing on both chessboards. As Graeme Herd and Ella Akerman have observed, the fractures within the Euro-Atlantic community allow President Putin, “the most consistent Westernizer since Catherine the Great,” to choose which of the core values of a divided transatlantic community Russia shares.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, Russia interacts with both polities simultaneously, speaking two different languages. In relations with Europe, the name of the game is multilateralism, economics, and desecuritization, as recent compromises with the EU over Kaliningrad and with NATO over the second wave of enlargement indicate. For all the talk of war in Kosovo and concern about the NATO enlargement, no major threats are identified on the European front where Russia evolves towards postmodern “soft security,” normative discourses (*e.g.* in the Council of Europe), and institution-building.

Relations with the United States are different. The evolution of US security thinking after 9/11 has presented Russia with a challenge of US unilateralism, but also allowed Moscow greater flexibility in the formulation and conduct of its own foreign policy and in recourse to traditional “hard security” instruments. As Lynch has put it,

All the while since 11 September, Russia’s eyes, half fascinated and half fearful with the dramatic US turn towards unilateralism, have been fixed on Washington: half fearful of the meaning of this surge for Russia, but half fascinated also with the opportunities this opens for Russia to pursue more openly, even more unilaterally, its own interests.<sup>70</sup>

The *Nord-Ost* hostage crisis in October 2002 and the subsequent proposed changes in Russian security doctrine have revealed a similarity between Russia and the United States in performing the rituals of national security. On the day following the resolution of the hostage crisis, President Putin issued a directive to Russia's Defense Minister, Sergei Ivanov, to draft amendments to the January 2000 National Security Concept to adapt the armed forces for counter-terrorist missions.

Inside Russia, the planned changes provide for army units and airborne troops to assist units of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and Interior Ministry in interdicting terrorist groups. Abroad, Russia tries to emulate the US model by justifying its right to make preemptive strikes against terrorists and to engage in extraterritorial law enforcement, first of all having in mind the Pankisi gorge in Georgia, reportedly a hideout of the Chechen terrorists.<sup>71</sup> However, as the Romans said, *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi* ("All that is allowed to Jupiter is not allowed to an ox"), and further out-of-the-area strikes are highly problematic for Russia, so the new security posture is likely to be "preemption lite."

The *Nord-Ost* crisis has highlighted significant shifts in Russian public consciousness similar to those in the US. Since 9/11 the US has turned into a nation at war, preoccupied with homeland defense and with the war on terrorism much more than with any other issue, including the economic recession, as indicated by the electorate agenda at the November 2002 mid-term elections. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security in the US in January 2003 was mirrored in the merger of several security agencies in Russia in March 2003 under the auspices of the powerful FSB. In both cases, the authorities cited the need to consolidate and streamline the counter-terrorism campaign in strikingly similar language.

## Conclusion.

### Moscow, Red Square, 2003

Putin's foreign policy completes a cycle of the past 15 years and challenges the entire strategic paradigm of Russian modernity. According to modern thinking (which most of the Russian foreign policy and security elite still harbor), territory was sacrosanct and therefore strategic, while alliances, treaties and norms were shifting and tactical. Putin seeks to reverse this paradigm, regarding territory as a tactical resource and an alliance with the security community of the West as a strategic goal. What his critics at home bemoan as the "encirclement of Russia" and a geopolitical catastrophe (NATO enlargement into the Baltic states; separation from Kaliningrad by a visa barrier; deployment of US troops in Afghanistan; US bases in Central Asia and special forces in Georgia; a US war in Iraq and a possible wider, long-term US presence in the Middle East), Putin regards as mere tactical concessions, pawns in a larger strategic design.

In doing so, he challenges the entire territorial paradigm, the cornerstone of Russian modern history. In the past decade and a half, Russia has been evolving towards a postmodern condition that Paul Virilio called *deterritorialization*.<sup>72</sup> According to Gearóid Ó Tuathail, it concerns

the rearranging and restructuring of spatial relations as a consequence of the technological, material and geopolitical transformations of the late twentieth century. Deterritorialisation is the name given to the problematic of territory losing its significance and power in everyday life.<sup>73</sup>

Putin's foreign policy can be interpreted as a move in this direction. He attempts a reformulation of the national interest from a spatial definition to a functional definition. For the first time in

Russian history, national interest is not linked to sheer power and territorial control, but rather to domestic reform, prosperity and efficiency of governance. Putin still envisions Russia as a “power,” but in a different sense; his policy is not pro-Western (as was former Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev’s, for example) but pro-Russian, of a pragmatic variety. For Kozyrev, joining the West was an ideological leap of faith; Putin’s policy of anchoring is driven by enlightened self-interest: he needs the West for Russia to succeed in a globalizing world. A black belt in judo, Putin applies its philosophy: do not counter an overwhelming opponent, but use his force to your own advantage.

The pragmatic nature of Putin’s Westernization is underscored by the fact that he pursues different agendas with different parts of the West—Europe and the US—trying to obtain maximum tactical advantages on either side (as seen in Russian maneuvers in the run-up to, and during, the war in Iraq). In issues of terrorism and homeland security, Russian polity and society seem to be closer to the United States than to Europe. One can see the emerging “arch of national interest” extending from the United States to Russia, over the heads of disconcerted Europeans. Russia tries to emulate the global posture of the US on a smaller scale, at least in the east and south of the post-Soviet space, accepting the role of United States’ junior partner in the war on terrorism. Meanwhile, in Europe, Russia makes an emphasis on trade, investment, institutional dialogue and cooperative regionalism (e.g. on the issue of Kaliningrad).

***For the first time in Russian history, national interest is not linked to sheer power and territorial control, but rather to domestic reform, prosperity and efficiency of governance.***

“Hard-security” affinity and partnership with the United States and “soft-security” dialogue and institution-building with Europe—such are the two faces of Putin’s Westernization. Like the West

itself, Russia, too, is schizophrenically split between modernity and post-modernity, national myths and globalization. Russian space is vast and indiscriminate. It can accommodate a postmodern Moscow, an odd mixture of Las Vegas and a European cultural capital, and grim industrial towns built around (and decaying with) Soviet-era factories. This dualism is discernible in Putin's approach: pursuing an essentially postmodern agenda (adaptation to globalization), he often resorts to modern means (rebuilding the state, resurrecting the narratives of national greatness). Russia is preparing for entry into the WTO and at the same time reinstating the old Soviet anthem; she is abandoning the death penalty while pursuing a ruthless war in Chechnya.

Time and again, the paradox of Russia's evolution, caught between geopolitics and geo-economy, national interest and globalization, is represented by a universal Russian icon, St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square. St. Basil's, too, defies historical categorizations and architectural styles, simultaneously appearing Muscovite and Asiatic, sacred and ironic, traditional and postmodern.

The coeval of Russian modernity, St. Basil's was built by the precursor of the Russian Empire, Ivan the Terrible, and was preserved by a curator of the Soviet Empire, Josef Stalin. According to an anecdote, it was earmarked for demolition in the mid-1930s to allow for easier passage of armored units through Red Square during military parades, but at a planning meeting over the renovation of Red Square, Stalin placed a model of the Cathedral back into its original position, thus cutting short any further discussion on the subject.

Over the centuries, St. Basil's stood witness to a tumultuous history. It was desecrated by the Poles in 1611, by the French in 1812 (they turned it into a stable), and stripped of its crosses and bells by the Bolsheviks in 1920. Apparitions of the Tsar, and

executions of the prisoners of state (like the executions of the *streletsy*, an elite military corps that staged a mutiny against Peter the Great) in front of its walls in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gave way to a lively marketplace in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to May Day parades in the twentieth century. On August 25, 1968 eight Soviet citizens protested against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in front of St. Basil's. In 1987, a German amateur pilot, Mathias Rust, flew undetected all the way from Hamburg and landed his Cessna outside the Cathedral, much to the joy of tourists and to the confusion of Soviet air defenses.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, pro-democracy rallies convened behind St. Basil's, and in October 2002, during the *Nord-Ost* hostage crisis, relatives of the hostages demonstrated there, calling to meet the demands of the terrorists and to end the war in Chechnya.

Today St. Basil's serves as a backdrop for rock concerts, like the one by Paul McCartney in May 2003, for festivals of street basketball, and for occasional performances by radical artists that are promptly intercepted by the Red Square police. Layers of history have built up like fanciful decorations on its walls, each century adding a new chapel and a new look, turning St. Basil's into a palimpsest, a postmodern pastiche, rather than a symbol of modernity. Having lost its sacral power over the Russian space, St. Basil's has turned into a working model of Russian time, a quote from itself, a representation of a modern Russia, which has probably ended, and of a postmodern Russia that is waiting to happen. ■



## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup>According to an apocryphal story, Ivan the Terrible ordered the architects to be blinded on completion of the construction, so that the perfection of their work could never be repeated.

<sup>2</sup>Milner-Gulland, Robin, "Symbolic Landscapes in Muscovite Russia", in R.Reid *et al.* (eds) *Structure and Tradition in Russian Society—a Festschrift for Yuriy Lotman, Slavica Helsingiana 14*, Helsinki, 1994. Of today's eleven chapels of the Cathedral, the tenth and eleventh were added in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>3</sup>A comprehensive definition of modernity was suggested by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman who argued that modernity is a constant struggle to eliminate blank spaces—in one's world view, or on the political map: "The typically modern practice, the substance of modern politics, of modern intellect, of modern life, is the effort to exterminate ambivalence: an effort to define precisely—and to suppress or eliminate everything that could not or would not be precisely defined. Modern practice is not aimed at the conquest of foreign lands, but at the filling of the blank spots in the *compleat mappa mundi*." (Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 7-8). From Kant's answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" through Adorno and Horkheimer's re-definition of "modern Enlightenment" to Lyotard's deconstruction of, and Habermas' passionate defense of modernity, vast literature exists on the political dimension of modernity. See: Kant, Immanuel. "Beantwortung der Frage: was

ist Aufklärung?,” in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. by Wilhelm Weischedel, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966, Vol. VI: *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie und Pädagogik*, pp. 53-61; Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1947 (first published 1944); Lyotard, Jean-François. *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savior*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979; Habermas, Jürgen. “Die Moderne—ein unvollendetes Projekt,” in *Kleine politische Schriften* (I-IV). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981, pp. 444-64; Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalisms*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988; Frisby, David. *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kacauer and Benjamin*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985; Berman, Marshall. *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. London: Verso, 1983.

<sup>4</sup>Raeff, Marc. *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

<sup>5</sup>Kotilaine, Jarmo and Marshall Poe, “Modernization in the Early Modern Context: The Case of Muscovy,” in Kotilaine and Poe, eds., *Modernizing Muscovy: Reform and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Russia*. London: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>6</sup>Keenan, Edward. “Muscovite Political Folkways,” *The Russian Review*, Vol. 45, no. 2, 1986, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup>Dukes, Paul. *The Superpowers. A Short History*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>As quoted in Trenin, Dmitry. *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalization*. Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2001, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>Chuev, Felix. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* [One hundred forty talks with Molotov], Moscow: Terra, 1991, p. 14, quoted in Trenin, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup>Klyuchevsky, Vassily. *Kurs rossiiskoi istorii* [A Course of Russian History], Vol. 2, Lecture XL, Moscow: Mysl Publishers, 1987, p. 372.

<sup>11</sup>Hellie, Richard. "The Structure of Modern Russian History: Towards a Dynamic Model," *Russian History*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 1977, pp. 1-22.

<sup>12</sup>Murawiec, Laurent. "Is Russia fated to *derzhavnost*?' Or: Small is beautiful," Paper presented at the Marshall Center Conference "Russia and the West at the Millennium," Moscow, October 2001. For fuller analysis, see Murawiec. *L'Esprit de Nations. Cultures et Géopolitique*. Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2002, pp. 236-282.

<sup>13</sup>Hosking, Geoffrey. "The Freudian Frontier," *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 March 1995, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Weber, Eugene. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1979.

<sup>15</sup>Zevelev, Igor. *Russia and its New Diasporas*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>Chervyakov, Vladimir. "The Russian National Economic Elite in the Political Arena," in Klaus Segbers, Stephan de Spiegeleire (eds.) *Post-Soviet Puzzles: Mapping the Political Economy of the Former Soviet Union*, Vol. I: Against the Background of the Former Soviet Union. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995, pp. 205-282.

<sup>17</sup>Chervyakov, p. 208.

<sup>18</sup>Murawiec, *L'Esprit de Nations*, p. 250.

<sup>19</sup>Shafarevich, Igor, "Dve dorogi – k odnomu obryvu" [Two roads to one precipice], *Novyi mir* (Moscow), No. 7, July 1989, pp. 147-165.

<sup>20</sup>One could see a similar affinity between modernism and Italian Fascism: Mussolini was for some time a follower of the Italian Futurists, while the leader of the Futurists, Filippo Marinetti, argued that fascism was futurism's natural extension.

<sup>21</sup>Hopf, Ted. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002, Chapter 2. See also Francis Fukuyama, "The Modernizing Imperative. The USSR as an Ordinary Country," *National Interest*, Vol. 20, Spring 1993, pp. 10-18.

<sup>22</sup>Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

<sup>23</sup>Kordonsky, Simon. "The Structure of Economic Space in Post-Perestroika Society and the Transformation of the Administrative Market," in Klaus Segbers and Stephan De Spiegeleire (eds.) *Post-Soviet Puzzles: Mapping the Political Economy of the Former Soviet Union*, Vol. I: Against the Background of the Former Soviet Union. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995, p. 164.

<sup>24</sup>Castells, Manuel. *The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture*. Vol. III, End of Millennium, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000, pp. 6-7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Castells, *The End of Millennium*, pp. 10, 15.

<sup>27</sup>Castells, *The End of Millennium*, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>32</sup>“It is no accident that the Soviet Union, General Motors, IBM and centrally directed Asian capitalism all were forced to restructure in the same decade. They could not deal with the new dynamic created by the microchip and the personal computer—which made dispersed systems of business, production, information gathering and governance much more efficient than centrally commanded ones.” (Friedman, Thomas L. “Russia is Modernizing Better than Indonesia,” *International Herald Tribune*, 27 July 1998).

<sup>33</sup>For an analysis of the administrative/territorial structure and phenomenology of the Soviet space, see: Kagansky, Vladimir, “Sovetskoye prostranstvo: konstruktsiya i destruktziya” [“The Soviet Space: Construction and Destruction,”] in Sergei Chernyshov (ed.) *Inoe. Khrestomatiya novogo rossiiskogo samosoznaniya* [The Different. Anthology of the New Russia's Self-Consciousness.] Moscow: Argus, 1995, Vol. 1, pp. 89-127.

<sup>34</sup>Kagansky, p. 92.

<sup>35</sup>Gaddy, Clifford and Fiona Hill, “Putin's Agenda, America's Choice: Russia's Search for Strategic Stability,” Brookings Institution Policy Brief, no. 99, May 2002, Available at [www.brook.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb99.htm](http://www.brook.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb99.htm), accessed 4 November 2002.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>Salmin, Alexei. *SNG: Sostoyanie i perspektivy razvitiya* [The CIS: The Current State and Prospects.] Moscow: Gorbachev Foundation, 1992.

<sup>38</sup>Adomeit, Hannes. "Russia as a 'great power' in world affairs: images and reality," *International Affairs* (London), Vol. 71, no. 1 (January 1995), pp. 38-39.

<sup>39</sup>Adomeit, p. 41.

<sup>40</sup>The term was pioneered by Paul Kennedy. (Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, New York: Random House, 1987; on the USSR see pp. 488-514.)

<sup>41</sup>Cooper, Robert. "Russia, the West and Global Civilization," in Sergei Medvedev, Alexander Kononov and Sergei Oznobishchev (eds.) *Russia and the West at the Millennium*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2003).

<sup>42</sup>During his postgraduate study at the Law School of the Moscow University in the late 1950s, Mikhail Gorbachev had been a roommate and friend of the Czech student Zdenek Mlynár, who later became one of the architects of the "Prague Spring." In his memoirs, Mlynár notes that "Gorbachev's policies are a historic rehabilitation of the Czechoslovak attempt at reform in 1968." (Mlynár, Zdenek. *Kholodom veyet ot Kremlya* [Cold wind blows from the Kremlin; English edition titled *Nightfrost in Prague*,] Maspeth, NY: Problems of Eastern Europe, 1988, p. iii).

<sup>43</sup>Fadin, Andrei, "Modernizatsiya cherez katastrofu" [Modernization through a Catastrophe?], in Sergei Chernyshov (ed.) *Inoe. Khrestomatiya novogo rossiiskogo samosoznaniya* [The Different. Reader of the New Russia's Self-Consciousness,] Moscow: Argus, 1995, Vol. I, p. 325.

<sup>44</sup>Rutland, Peter. "Putin's Path to Power," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (December 2000), p. 316.

<sup>45</sup>Calculated after Bolotin, B. "Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie pokazateli Zapada i Rossii" [Socioeconomic figures for the West and Russia,] *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, 1999, no. 8 (August), pp. 114-28.

<sup>46</sup>Arbatov, Alexei, 'Bezopasnost' Rossii v mnogopolyusnom mire' [Russia's security in a multipolar world,] Paper presented at the Marshall Center conference "Russia and the West at the Millennium," Moscow, October 2001.

<sup>47</sup>Groys, Boris, "Rossija kak podsoznanie Zapada" [Russia as the subconsciousness of the West], in *Utopia i obmen* [Utopia and exchange], Moscow: Znak, 1993. See also: Medvedev, Sergei, "Russia as the Subconsciousness of Finland," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 30, no. 1, March 1999, pp. 95-109.

<sup>48</sup>Solzhenitsyn, Alexander Isayevich. *Kak nam obustroit' Rossiyu: posil'nye soobrazeniya* [Rebuilding Russia: Tentative Proposals,] Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990; English edition titled *Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.

<sup>49</sup>"Narkotik neft" [The Oil Drug], *Expert* (Moscow), no. 42, 9 November 1998, p. 41. As former USSR Minister of Foreign Trade Konstantin Katushev confided about the Soviet petrodollars, ". . . we, the government, were not quite effective in using them. . . this big money had relaxed and maybe corrupted our leadership and ourselves." (Quoted in Denchev, K. "Neftegazovyi factor v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniyakh" [Oil and gas factor in international relations,] *Politika* (Moscow), no. 3 (Autumn 1999), p. 133).

<sup>50</sup>Gavrilenkov, Yevgeny and Wolfram Schrettl. "Integration into the World Economy: The Case of Russia," in Sergei Medvedev, Alexander Konovalov and Sergei Oznobishchev (eds.) *Russia and the West at the Millennium*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2003.

<sup>51</sup>Rutland, Peter. "Shifting Sands. Russia's Economic Development and Its Relations with the West," in Sergei Medvedev, Alexander Konovalov and Sergei Oznobishchev (eds.) *Russia and the West at the Millennium*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2003.

<sup>52</sup>Ignatova, Maria. "Russia is still living off natural resources," interview with Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko, *Izvestiya*, 8 June 2001.

<sup>53</sup>Rutland, "Shifting Sands. . ."

<sup>54</sup>Salmin, Alexei. "Vnutripoliticheskie aktory i vneshnyaya politika Rossiskoi Federatsii" [Domestic actors and foreign policy of the Russian Federation], in Sergei Medvedev, Alexander Konovalov and Sergei Oznobishchev (eds.) *Russia and the West at the Millennium*. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 2003.

<sup>55</sup>For a recent analysis of the CIS, see Baev, Pavel, "The CIS: Refusing to Fade Away," *The Jamestown Foundation Russia and Eurasia Review*, Vol. 1, no. 10, 22 October 2002, article available online at [http://russia.jamestown.org/pubs/view/rer\\_001\\_010\\_001.htm](http://russia.jamestown.org/pubs/view/rer_001_010_001.htm) Accessed 7 November 2002.

<sup>56</sup>Graham, Thomas, "A world without Russia?," Jamestown Foundation Conference, Washington, DC, 9 June 1999, article available online <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/3336.html>, accessed 2 August 2002.

<sup>57</sup>As Brzezinski has put it, "the disintegration late in 1991 of the world's territorially largest state created a black hole in the



very center of Eurasia. It was as if the geopoliticians' 'heartland' had been suddenly yanked from the global map." (Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books, 1997, p. 87.) See also Jervis, Robert and Seweryn Bialer (eds), *Soviet-American Relations after the Cold War*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991; Jervis, Robert & Jack Snyder (eds.), *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

<sup>58</sup>Medvedev, Sergei. *Russia's Futures: Implications for the EU, the North and the Baltic Region*, Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, Vol. 8. Helsinki: UPI and Bonn: IEP, 2000, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup>Lynch, Dov, "Anchoring in Troubled Seas," Paper presented at the conference on "Reassessing the Transatlantic Partnership," Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, 19-20 July 2002.

<sup>60</sup>Quoted in Herd, Graeme and Ella Akerman, "Russian Strategic Realignment and the Post-Post-Cold War Era?," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 33, no. 3, September 2002, p. 365.

<sup>61</sup>"NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality," Declaration by heads of state and government of NATO member-states and the Russian Federation, Rome, 28 May 2002; available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b020528e.htm>, accessed 11 November 2002.

<sup>62</sup>Lynch, Dov, "Anchoring in Troubled Seas."

<sup>63</sup>Cooper, Robert, "The new liberal imperialism," *Observer*, 7 April 2002, article available online <http://www.observer.co.uk/comment/story/0,6903,680093,00.html>, accessed 30 July 2002.

<sup>64</sup>Kagan, Robert, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review*, June 2002, article available online <http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html>, accessed 30 July 2002.

<sup>65</sup>Cooper, "The new liberal imperialism."

<sup>66</sup>Kagan, *Op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup>Kupchan, Charles, "The end of the West," *Atlantic Monthly*, November 2002, article online <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2002/11/kupchan.htm>, accessed 12 November 2002.

<sup>68</sup>For the parallel Russian and English text, see [http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/ex\\_oriente\\_lux.html](http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/ex_oriente_lux.html), accessed 12 November 2002.

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<sup>70</sup>Lynch, Dov, "Russia: Anchoring in Troubled Seas," *EU ISS Newsletter*, No. 3-4, September 2002; article available online <http://www.iss-eu.org/newsletters/n3-4e.pdf>, accessed 13 November 2002.

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The paper examines the historical and political roots behind a turn in Russian foreign policy undertaken by President Vladimir Putin in the wake of the terrorist acts of 9/11. Current Russian foreign policy vastly differs from the previous decade in that, using the opportunity and the rhetoric of the war on terrorism, Putin made a normative choice in favor of Westernization and strategic partnership with the United States and Europe.

The paper posits that the realignment in Russian foreign and security policy is of a long-term revolutionary nature. This is not an *ad hoc* marriage of convenience, nor a policy of playing a weaker hand, but a profound reappraisal of Russia's national interests and place in the world, defying the centuries-old imperial paradigms. In order to appreciate the magnitude of this change, the paper looks beyond the Putin presidency and transformations of the past decade, into the historical roots of Russian statehood and foreign policy. This Marshall Center Paper is an essay about foreign policy as explained by history, culture and geography.

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